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OPERATION CHROMITE (INCHON)

Combat Studies Institute
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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OPERATION CHROMITE
(INCHON)

OFFENSIVE, AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT, JOINT

US X CORPS

15 SEPTEMBER 1950

PREPARED BY

STAFF GROUP D/SECTION 2

MAJ ROBERT SCHMIDT

MAJ RONALD ARMSTRONG

MAJ WAYNE BOY

MAJ WARNER FERGUSON

MAJ GEORGE FRANKLIN

MAJ KIAT GAN

MAJ ANGEL HERNANDEZ

MAJ FRANK HOSEK

MAJ JOHN KIDDER

MAJ LLOYD MCCAMMON

MAJ DAVID NICHOLSON

MAJ HENRY SHIRAH

MAJ DORENE STEKLASA

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ABSTRACT

COMMON REFERENCE: Inchon.

TYPE OPERATION: Offensive, Amphibious Assault, Joint.

OPPOSING FORCES: US: X Corps (7th Inf Div and 1st Marine Div)

NKPA: 226th Regt and 87th Regt

SYNOPSIS: The Inchon Landing. At dawn, the US X Corps, Major General Edward M. Almond commanding, began landing over the difficult and treacherous beaches at Inchon, on the west coast of Korea, more than 150 miles north of the the battlefield, and west of Seoul. Strategic surprise was complete, although a 2-day preliminary bombardment had warned the few NKA detachments in and about Seoul. The 1st Marine Division swept through slight opposition, securing Kimpo airport. The 7th Division, following the Marines ashore, turned south, cutting the railroad and highway supplying the NKA in the south, and Seoul was surrounded.

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Michael Langley.

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Robert Debs Heirl.

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I. INTRODUCTION

SETTING THE SCENE

On 15 September 1950, eighty-three chaotic and tumultuous days after North Korea invaded South Korea, the United States X Corps initiated Operation CHROMITE by conducting an amphibious assault on the port of Inchon on Korea's west coast.

Operation CHROMITE is more commonly known simply as INCHON, and will be referred to as INCHON in this paper.

INCHON took place on the heels of the dismal retreat of United States and Republic of Korea (ROK) forces down the Korean Peninsula in June and July to an enclave at the peninsula's southern tip. The objective of INCHON was to land a large force behind the bulk of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA), recapture South Korea's capital Seoul (for obvious political and psychological reasons), cut NKPA logistical lines, and provide an "anvil" against which the US Eighth Army, attacking from the south, would crush the NKPA.

The military impact of INCHON was dramatic. The success of the operation has been rightfully called a turning point in the war. That turning point was, however, more than a military direction. INCHON also forced decisions which ultimately altered the political nature of the war and the United States' foreign policy. This political result mandates that one

understand INCHON's place within the Korean War, the United States' first international limited war in the nuclear age, and the Korean War's place within the wider East-West conflict that was being played out at the time.

RESEARCHING INCHON

After one begins to research INCHON one thing becomes painfully apparent. There is a real lack of original North Korean sources, at least ones which are not classified. Since North Korea was not defeated and occupied in the sense that Germany and Japan were in World War II, that equitable wealth and depth of source material does not exist for The Korean War and INCHON. A particularly significant limitation is the inaccessibility of North Korean leaders. Not knowing what leaders in a position to make decisions knew, how they evaluated the situation, and their criteria for decision-making limits the understanding of any operation.

Given these limitations, works on the Korean War are primarily the United State's perspective because those resources and leaders are available. These limitations also mean that there are some questions regarding INCHON that may never be answered definitively. For instance, did the North Koreans know there was going to be an amphibious assault? If they did know why did they fail to act? The answers to these questions are speculation; researched, analytical, inductive speculation, but speculation none the less.

The limitations are evident in most works about INCHON.

Victory at High Tide, The Inchon-Seoul Campaign by Robert D. Heinl, Jr. and U.S. Marine Operations in Korea 1950-1953, Volume II, The Inchon-Seoul Operation by Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, USMC, are the two most exhaustive works on INCHON. Both books are well researched. They do not require any military knowledge to understand them, but the general reader would probably find them slow going. The authors analyze the information available about North Korean intentions and actions and reach conclusions, but both books are basically the "American Story" of INCHON.

INCHON is addressed to varying degrees in such broader works as Roy E. Appleman's United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950), T. R. Fehrenback's This Kind of War, and David Rees' Korea The Limited War.

The Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) is a disappointment regarding original sources. The most useful source is Headquarters X Corps' War Diary Summary for Operation CHROMITE, but even that is a summation of original daily logs. Part II of the Diary, The Staff Estimates, which would have been very helpful, are not on file in CARL.

Heinl and Montross and Canzona are faithful to the information provided in X Corps War Diary, with a few exceptions. Where these exceptions occurred, the times, dates, and figures provided in the War Diary were used in this paper.

II. THE STRATEGIC SETTING

PRELUDE TO DIVISION

Korea is a 600 mile long, mountainous peninsula that juts into the Yellow Sea at the juncture of Russian, Japanese, and Chinese strategic interests. (Map II-A) The domination of Korea by one of these countries threatens the other two. As a result, Korea's history is the story of the efforts of Russia, Japan, and China to dominate Korea politically and physically.

(O'Ballance, pp. 15-16) Given this situation, which will be examined more closely, one may argue that there would have been some type of conflict in Korea, or over Korea, in the post World War II era despite the world-wide East-West conflict. Given that the Cold War was very hot in the late 1940's and early 1950's, that the Soviet Union was pursuing world-wide physical and ideological expansion of her area of influence, that the United States and her allies were attempting to contain Soviet expansionism, and that post World War II agreements divided Korea in half, conflict in Korea was almost inevitable. To understand fully and appreciate the significance of INCHON, one must understand this historical backdrop of conflict, division, and the relationship of the Korean War to world-wide East-West conflict.

In approximately 100 AD, China invaded Korea and established

its dominance over the region. China did not maintain an occupation of Korea, but she did maintain political dominance over Korea. This suzerainty lasted until the late 19th Century. In 1876 an ambitious and expansionist Japan forced Korea to sign a trade treaty favorable to Japan despite Chinese opposition. The inevitable clash of Chinese and Japanese interest over Korea came in 1894 when a Japanese army landed at Inchon and defeated a Chinese army that had been sent to Korea to help maintain internal stability. The Japanese continued their campaign across the Yalu River and seized Port Arthur in Manchuria. Ten years later Japan squashed Russian ambitions in Korea by again landing at Inchon, driving north across the Yalu River, and defeating the Russian Far Eastern Army at Mukden. (O'Ballance, p. 15-16).

Following this victory, the Japanese annexed Korea and maintained a colonial rule until 1945. During this time Korean nationalist sentiment surfaced and coalesced around two strong but divergent leaders. Syngman Rhee emerged as the dominant figure in southern Korea. As a result of his nationalist activities he was forced to flee Korea in 1919. He settled in China and established the Provisional Korean Government. In the northern part of Korea a communist guerilla who adopted the name of Kim Il Sung from a dead resistance fighter came to prominence. Kim Il Sung lead scattered resistance movements against the Japanese before moving to the Soviet Union in the late 1930's. He returned to Korea in 1945 as a major in the Soviet occupation force. These two personalities foreshadowed

the post World War II polarization of Korea. (O'Ballance, p. 15-19)

KOREA DIVIDED

The history of Korea's post World War II division began at the Cairo Conference of 1943. President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and General Chiang Kai-Shek discussed the post war status of Korea during that conference and agreed that Korea should be free and unified after the War. This decision was reaffirmed at the Potsdam Conference in July of 1945. It was additionally agreed that a joint US-Soviet occupation force would be used to accept the Japanese surrender in Korea and to facilitate administration of the country. It is interesting to note that the 38th Parallel, which was selected as the dividing line between occupation forces, was selected by Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel and Major Dean Rusk of the War Department General Staff working from a small wall map under the pressure of a thirty minute suspense to determine a demarkation line. Their goal was to select a line that would allow the capital city of Seoul and a minimum of two ports (Pusan and Inchon), needed for discharge and sustainment of occupation forces, to fall in the US sector. It should also be noted that, unknown to Bonesteel and Rusk, the 38th Parallel had been offered by the Japanese to the Russians in 1846 as a boundary between their respective spheres on the peninsula. The Russian negotiator rejected the proposal with the comment "Korea's destiny as a component part

of the Russian Empire... has been ordained for us to fulfill."
(Military Intelligence Division, pp. 10-11)

On 6 August 1945 the US bombed Hiroshima. This precipitated a Russian declaration of war on Japan on 8 August, just one day prior to the dropping of the second bomb on Nagasaki. With Japanese surrender imminent, the Russians crossed the Yalu on 12 August to receive the surrender of the 770,000 man Japanese forces in Manchuria and North Korea. By 18 August Soviet Forces reached the 38th parallel. The US, however, did not put troops ashore at Inchon until 8 September 1945 to disarm the 180,000 Japanese troops south of the 38th Parallel. (Military Intelligence Division, pp. 2-5)

In March 1946 a Joint Commission of Soviet and American representatives met in Seoul to create a blueprint for trusteeship of the nation and eventual unification. However, difficulties cropped up immediately as Korean nationals insisted on immediate independence as opposed to trusteeship. Neither the US nor the USSR would agree to a plan since each power insisted on an independent state ideologically compatible with its own views. Agreeing only on the fact of disagreement, the Commission adjourned. (Reese, pp. 11-12)

It reconvened in May 1947 for a second attempt at finding a solution. This time, the US proposed free elections based on representation, according to population. Since the southern populous (21 million vs 8 million in the north) would derive an advantage by this formula, the Soviets refused calling for an election of an equal number of representatives

from both the industrial north and the agricultural south. At this point the US balked. The commission collapsed due to the mutual unacceptance of proposals and the problem of unification was passed to the United Nations. The United Nations set up a nine nation UN Temporary Commission on Korea to supervise elections and settle the issue. The Soviets subsequently refused the commission representatives access to North Korea. With this action the line was drawn. The parallel that was intended to be an administrative demarcation line now became a physical barrier which was to have a major political significance. (Reese, pp. 11-12)

While the super powers were solidifying the physical and political division of Korea in the international arena, in the north the Soviet Union was building a communist state with a powerful military machine. All political factions in North Korea were merged into the Korean National Democratic Front. From that political party came the Provisional People's Republic. The creation of a one party state simplified the political process so that by 1947 the "provisional" was dropped from the People's Republic title. By merger, purge and scheme, Soviet oriented North Korean communists, with the aid of Soviet advisors, created the Democratic People's Republic, which was officially established on 8 September 1948 with Kim Il Sung as president. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 22-23; 50-53)

Meanwhile in the south, the United States had established an interim government under Syngman Rhee as a prelude to complete civilian rule. United Nations monitored elections were

held in May 1947 to elect an assembly in which 100 seats were left vacant for the unification with North Korea. Syngman Rhee was sworn in as the President of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations recognized the government of the Republic as the lawful authority of the whole country. (O'Ballance, pp. 23-24)

By June 1949, Soviet and United States occupation forces had left their respective sectors. Unfortunately they left behind a divided country with two hostile camps in place of what was suppose to be, as declared at the Cairo Conference, a free, independent, unified nation. (O'Ballance, pp. 23-24).

NORTH KOREA ARMED - PRELUDE TO ATTACK

The War Department Military Intelligence Division reported in its Military Summary of the Far East dated 8 November 1945 that, "There is no Korean Army in existence at the present time and as yet no definite information has been received regarding the possible formation of a native army in Korea." This situation was changing even as the report was being written, for in the north militarization kept pace with development of the political infrastructure.

When the Soviets entered North Korea in 1945, they established a body of 30,000 police and para-military border constabulary to buttress the regimentation of North Korean society and reinforce internal security. In 1946 they additionally set up the nucleus of a conventional armed force around a cadre of Soviet trained Koreans led by Kim Il Sung.

This force, called the Peace Preservation Corps, had as its core the 18,000 man Korean Volunteer Army which was a Korean force that formed in 1939 in Yenan, China, under the Chinese Communist Forces to fight the Japanese and later the Nationalist Chinese. This group was armed with surrendered Japanese weapons until reequipped with Soviet arms beginning in December 1946. (Military Intelligence Section, p. 6)

During the 1946-47 time frame, an internal struggle broke out within the Peace Preservation Corps between the Yenan faction which favored a Maoist, light infantry guerrilla type organization and the Soviet trained Koreans who argued for a small, mobile, army based on a Soviet model with strong armor and artillery elements. The Soviet position won with the backing of Kim Il Sung. As a result, 10,000 Koreans were sent to the Soviet Union for training, and a 3,000 man Soviet training mission was brought into North Korea to instruct and advise. (O'Ballance, p. 24)

In February 1948, a Defense Ministry was formed and the Peace Preservation Corps was renamed the North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA). Prior to this conversion from a supposed training unit status to a combat unit status, the NKPA had been building its ranks with combat veterans returning from China. To supplement and maintain the military's strength, general mandatory conscription was instituted in July, 1948. By June 1950, the NKPA was 135,000 strong. The ground forces alone boasted seven divisions and one armored brigade composed of at least one-third combat veterans and supported by over 210

combat aircraft. (O'Ballance, p. 25)

So this was the military system that procured the North Korean military forces that invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950. Since the North Korean Army was a Soviet creation, it was organized and trained similar to the Soviet Army and was armed primarily with Soviet produced weapons. As is the case in most armies, the basic tactical formation of the North Korean Army was the division. A North Korean infantry division had approximately 11,000 men when at full strength. An infantry division normally did not have organic armor units, but these were attached when required. (Thomas, pp. 24-25)

By 1950 The NKPA numbered between 127,000 and 135,000 and was organized into eight infantry divisions at full strength, two armored divisions at half strength equipped with T-34 tanks, a separate infantry regiment, a separate armored regiment, and a motorcycle reconnaissance regiment. A full one-third of the forces were hardened, experienced veterans who had served with the Chinese Communists or Soviets in World War II. The conscripts who came into the army after 1948 were generally rated poor materiel, but the veterans provided a core of experienced leadership at the officer and noncommissioned officer level. (Esposito, Sect. 3, p. 4; Thomas, pp. 50-53, 24-25; Appleman, pp. 8-12)

Since North Korea put most of her resources into the army, the air force and navy was small by comparison. The air force had between 180-210 Soviet built aircraft of all types. The North Korean navy was minuscule and equipped with some patrol

boats and other vessels suitable only for operations close to shore. (Thomas, pp. 50-53, p. 24; Esposito, Sect. 3, p. 4)

Because North Korea was and is a closed society, it is difficult to assess the "popular" support given to the North Korean military. The rank and file of the military were not true communists, that is, party members. Nevertheless they obeyed orders without hesitation. The NKPA, as is the case with most communist state armies, had the dual tactical and political chain of command to insure ideological as well as military obedience. (Thomas, p. 25) Assessing the support of the general public is even more difficult. If there was discontent, it certainly was not public.

THE ATTACK - A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The Soviet Union did not instigate and plan the North Korean attack into South Korea isolated from world events. To the contrary, events in Korea bore a direct relationship to global East-West conflict. The framework of this conflict and the relationships within it must be understood to appreciate the significance of INCHON within the Korean War.

The Grand Alliance which defeated Nazi Germany had begun to unravel before the war ended. Within two years after the end of World War II the ideological and political schism between the United States and The Soviet Union was sharply focused.

In 1946 the Soviets attempted an abortive expansion

into Iran followed rapidly by insurgencies in Greece and Turkey in 1947-1949. The murderous overthrow of President Bernes in Czechoslovakia followed in 1948 and the dramatic blockade of Berlin occurred in 1949. In the Far East, China had been captured by the communists and it appeared a Russian-Chinese alliance would bring years of relentless pressure to expand global communism. (Rees, pp. XII-XIII, 55-59; Link, pp. 706-709.)

The near loss of Greece resulted in the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947. The Truman Doctrine became synonymous with "Containment," which was not meant to destroy communism through direct conflict but to halt its expansion. The Marshall Plan followed in the same year and on 4 April 1949 the United States joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the first time the United States had joined a military alliance outside the Western Hemisphere during peacetime. (Link, p.209)

With their expansion in Europe and the Near East halted, The Soviets redirected their attention to the Far East. In 1950 it must have appeared they would have much to gain with minimal risk by directing North Korea to invade and conquer South Korea.

What the Soviets sought was an improved strategic position, particularly in regard to Japan. The Soviets feared a rearmed Japan as a member of some type of Far East NATO. Conquest of South Korea would demonstrate to Japan that Rhee, like Chiang in China, was a defenseless American puppet. This situation, The Soviets reasoned, would push the forces of Japanese neutralism into the Communist Party of Japan and break the defensive orbit

of America. Even if political control of Japan was not achieved, it would be surrounded by Soviet bases. (Rees, p. 18-19, Esposito, Sect 3)

The risk appeared to be minimal because America's Far East policy seemed to lack the resolve with which containment had been applied in Europe, especially in Korea. In his now famous speech to the Washington Press Club on 12 January 1950, Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, described an American defensive perimeter in the Far East which excluded Korea. (Rees, p. 19)

Acheson's Press Club speech also reflected an American military weakness that the Soviets already knew about; that the US did not have sufficient forces to garrison South Korea. This weakness, however, was reflective of a greater weakness in the US military. Rapid demobilization after World War II was followed by years of sparse defense budgets which left the ground forces pitifully weak as the majority of defense resources were channeled to strategic air forces in the belief that nuclear weapons, air delivered, would be the main component of the United States' defense policy and force structure. The unity of the services had also been damaged by bitter rivalries to justify component missions and lay claim to scarce resources. (Rees, p. 19)

What these policies meant in terms of military power on the ground in the Far East in 1950 is accurately portrayed by BG Vincent Esposito in the West Point Atlas of American Wars Vol II. (Sect 3),

The NKA invasion of South Korea found the United States with almost a third of its ground forces in the Far East—the 7th, 24th, 25th, and 1st Cavalry Divisions in Japan, the 5th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) in Hawaii and the 29th RCT in Okinawa. All of these units were filled with young replacements and were understrength: with the exception of one infantry regiment and one field artillery battalion in the 25th Division, all infantry regiments had been reduced from their normal three battalions to two; all artillery battalions from three firing batteries to two. The troops in Japan had been scattered on occupation duties; there was a shortage of suitable training areas, and some units had not yet satisfactorily completed their battalion training programs. Physical and psychological conditioning left a good deal to be desired. Weapons and equipment were practically all of World War II vintage, in poor condition and badly worn. Spare parts and ammunition were in short supply; some ammunition proved unreliable. Many radios were reported inoperable. Divisional tank units were equipped only with the M-24 light tank since medium tanks were too heavy for Japanese bridges and roads.

It should also be noted that strategic reserves were almost non-existent, which meant that the Korean War, at least the initial stages, would be fought with forces on hand. This paucity of forces would cause MacArthur difficulties in planning for INCHON.

ATTACK AND RESPONSE

The NKPA concentrated their 25 June 1950 invasion of South Korea in the Kaesong and Chorwon area. (Map II-B) The apparent intent was to seize Seoul quickly and overrun all of Korea. The armor spearheaded columns of the NKPA broke through the initial, hasty ROK defensive positions with little trouble. Although ROK units put up a stiff resistance around Chunchon,

the NKPA could not be contained and Seoul was captured on 28 June.

The first American response was to authorize the Far East Command (FECOM), commanded by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, to supply ammunition to ROK forces and to evacuate Americans. On 26 June President Truman authorized MacArthur to use US naval and air forces against the NKPA in South Korea. Simultaneously the US was conducting what was to be a successful campaign in the UN to get it to declare that North Korea had broken the peace and calling on UN members to give South Korea military assistance to repel the attack and restore peace and security.

After a personal reconnaissance of the battle front on 29 June, MacArthur informed The Joint Chiefs of Staff that,

The South Korean forces are in confusion, have not seriously fought and lack leadership. The only assurance for holding the present line and the ability to regain later the lost ground is through the introduction of United States ground combat forces into the Korean battle area. (Higgins, p. 26)

Accordingly, President Truman authorized MacArthur to enter Korea with the US Army in strength. MacArthur then ordered the 24th Infantry Division to deploy to Korea. The first elements of the division to reach Korea was TF Smith, a small delaying force composed of the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment. (Esposito, Sect 3) The United States had now inextricably committed itself to what would become its first international limited war in the nuclear age; a war in which the achievement of a political goal thru the influencing of the enemy's will

without totally defeating him ran counter to all of America's past experiences with total war in the 20th Century.

Why had the United States reacted so forcefully in an area which had been considered outside of the United States' defensive perimeter? President Truman's comment that, "This is the Greece of the Far East. If we are tough enough now, there won't be any next step," (Link, p. 721) reflected his view that Korea was only one part of the global East-West battle. Korea was viewed in many ways as a test case by the Soviets. If the West did not respond in Korea the Soviets would be encouraged to act elsewhere; the most feared elsewhere was Western Europe. If containment were to be a credible policy, and a successful policy, a response in Korea was demanded.

TF Smith, badly outnumbered, did little to stop the NKPA advance. As the rest of the 24th Infantry Division arrived in Korea it fought several desperate delaying actions which did slow but not halt the NKPA. During the month of July the Eighth Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Walton Walker, was established to command all US forces in Korea and the 1st Cavalry Division, 25th Infantry Division, and 29th Regimental Combat Team arrived in Korea and joined the fight. Despite many notable successes, by 5 August the UN forces had been pushed back to a perimeter around Pusan on the Southeast coast of Korea. (Map II-C) (Esposito, Sect 3, Maps 3 & 4)

Exploiting his interior lines to shift reserves rapidly from one threatened sector of the perimeter to another, Walker conducted a flexible aggressive defense throughout August and

early September. In an attempt to achieve victory before a continuing UN build-up in the perimeter, which included the introduction of the 2d Infantry Division, the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade, and the Marine 5th Regimental Combat Team(RCT) the NKPA launched a series of assaults around the perimeter from 27 August to 10 September. Some of these penetrated the perimeter, but were contained. By 10 September the NKA had spent itself. North Korea had planned for a two month campaign and that had already been exceeded. The North Koreans now found themselves short of food, fuel, and ammunition; numerically inferior to UN forces within the Pusan Perimeter; and at the end of very long and tenuous logistical lines that were weakly guarded. Thus the Eighth Army's defense of the Pusan Perimeter had created a window of opportunity for the UN forces. It was a window that would be opened wide by INCHON (Esposito, Sect 3, Maps 3 & 4; Rees, p. 78)

THE IDEA

At a time when the vision of most was focused on the spectacle of North Korea's southward advance and the defense of the Pusan Perimeter, MacArthur had already seen a way to switch from the defense to the offense and win the war. As General Matthew Ridgeway said, "While others thought of a way to withdraw our forces safely, MacArthur planned for victory." (Ridgeway, p. 33)

It would be impossible to pin-point the exact moment

MacArthur had the idea to conduct an amphibious assault at Inchon, but most sources agree that he had the concept to conduct an amphibious operation behind NKPA lines by late June. Michael Langely contends in his book Inchon Landing, that MacArthur had the idea to conduct an amphibious assault on Inchon on 29 June during a personal aerial reconnaissance when he saw how the NKPA was extending its supply lines; and MacArthur did state in Reminiscences that, as a result of that reconnaissance, he decided the only way to stop North Korea from conquering all of South Korea was to, "throw the occupation soldiers into the breach. Completely outnumbered, I would rely on strategic maneuver to overcome the great odds against me." (Langely, p. 43; MacArthur, p. 333).

There does seem to be some question about where MacArthur decided Inchon would be the target. In Roy E. Appleman's The US Army in the Korean War, South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, the impression is given that MacArthur did not decide on Inchon as the target until late July. Lynn Montross and Capt Nicholas Canzona's US Marine Operations in Korea, Vol II, The Inchon-Seoul Operation and Robert Heinl Jr's Victory at High Tide dispute this impression. Both well researched sources point out that on 4 July 1950, at a planning conference in Tokyo called to discuss an amphibious operation in the NKPA's rear, MacArthur preferred Inchon to any other target even at this early date. MacArthur further stated that the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) of his FECOM G-3 was already drafting plans for an Operation BLUEHEARTS

to be executed 22 July, which called for a landing at Inchon by a Marine Regimental Combat Team and the 1st Cavalry Division in coordination with a frontal attack from the south by the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions. Additionally, the staff of FECOM made it plain to the conference attendees, especially the Navy representatives, that the Inchon concept had originated with MacArthur. (Appleman, p. 489; Montross and Canzona, p. 6; Heinl, p. 16)

It appears that the decision to conduct an amphibious assault behind NKPA lines and that the target of that assault would be Inchon was reached early. It is not clear, however, that the decision was reached in the procedural manner taught at most military schools in which the commander states a mission; the staff prepares several courses of action to accomplish the mission along with an evaluation of each; recommends the best one; and, the commander then decides which course to adopt.

INCHON was a product of MacArthur's strategic vision. To make that vision a reality he had to overcome many obstacles, but he never wavered from conducting the operation at Inchon. What was it about Inchon that evoked this determination? In MacArthur's preception, Inchon and Seoul were the only places that offered strategic, decisive results. A landing at Inchon and recapture of Seoul would cut the NKPA's extended supply lines since Seoul was the major transportation hub to the South; the recapture of Seoul would provide a tremendous psychological and political advantage; and finally the forces around Inchon-Seoul would force the enemy to fight in two directions

and would ultimately be the "anvil" against which the hammer of the Eighth Army, attacking from the south would crush the NKPA. (Collins, p. 120)

The three greatest problems, MacArthur faced in making Inchon a reality was stabilizing of the Pusan Perimeter, building sufficient forces to conduct the operation, and getting the approval of a skeptical Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

Stabilization of the Pusan Perimeter and the Eighth Army's ability to conduct a northward offensive out of the perimeter simultaneously with the landing at Inchon was critical. If the Pusan Perimeter collapsed and the Eighth Army could not assume the offense, Inchon simply became an isolated amphibious operation and lost its decisive nature. From July through early September neither stabilization nor the Eighth Army's ability to assume the offense looked certain. Operation BLUEHEARTS had to be cancelled before the planning was even complete because it became necessary to commit the 1st Cavalry Division to the defense of the Pusan Perimeter. (Appleman, p. 493) Undaunted, MacArthur had his staff begin planning a new operation for the September time frame and requested on 19 July that the JCS give him a full Marine division, (the 1st Marine Division) and the US Army's 3d Infantry Division, which would relieve the 7th Infantry Division of occupation duty in Japan, thus freeing the later for participation in INCHON. (Bradley, p. 544)

The JCS replied to MacArthur that the 1st Marine Division would not be available until November or December. MacArthur promptly urged the JCS to reconsider stating that the

availability of the 1st Marine Division no later than 10 September was absolutely vital to his plans. This second request prompted the JCS to request on 22 July that MacArthur fully justify his plan. This JCS request was, according to General Omar Bradley, The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a not too subtle sign to MacArthur, that the JCS wanted a formal outline of his INCHON plan. (Bradley, p. 545)

The JCS had already gotten an overview of the Inchon concept on 14 July from Army Chief of Staff General Lawton Collins. Collins and Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt S. Vandenberg had been in the Far East earlier in July to ascertain the situation in Korea. On 13 July in a meeting with MacArthur, he outlined the broad concept for an amphibious assault in the NKPA's rear and favored Inchon as the target although Heigu and Chinnampo, both well north of Inchon, was being considered. (Collins, p. 121)

General Collins, who had concerns about the feasibility of an amphibious operation at Inchon, briefed the JCS upon his return. The JCS shared Collins' view and, in their own evaluation and communications with MacArthur, expressed three primary concerns. The first concern was that the Pusan Perimeter could be held and as General Bradley, who probably expressed it most vehemently, stated that, "It seemed imprudent that a large portion of his (MacArthur's) staff be preoccupied with a blue-sky scheme like Inchon rather than with the immediate and grave threat to Pusan." (Bradley, p. 544) A second major concern, one voiced strongly by the Marines, was the question of

whether the Eighth Army could breakout of the Pusan Perimeter and advance over 150 miles to Inchon before the NKPA could react and concentrate sufficient forces to overwhelm the forces at Inchon. (Collins, p. 120) In other words, the JCS was concerned that MacArthur was risking defeat in detail. The third concern was the risk involved due to the geography of Inchon. The Navy and Marine Chiefs basically concurred in Bradley's evaluation that Inchon was the "worst possible place ever selected for an amphibious operation." (Bradley, p. 544) A more detailed analysis will be provided later, but briefly this JCS concern was well founded because the channels leading to Inchon were narrow, shallow, long and could be easily interdicted; the huge tide fluctuations severely limited the times available to conduct the operation; the harbor was dominated by a fortified island; and Inchon, itself was surrounded by a twelve foot seawall. (Collins, p. 118; Bradley, p. 544)

Throughout this period the JCS found themselves in a awkward position in dealing with Inchon and MacArthur. Traditionally, theater commanders are given broad responsibilities and ther allowed great latitude in planning and conducting operations. So the JCS was prone by tradition to give MacArthur the greatest possible freedom and not interfere. But, as General Bradley stated, "(President) Truman was depending upon us to an extraordinary degree for military counsel...and... since Inchon was an extremely risky maneuver... we determined to keep a close eye on the Inchon Plan and, if we felt so compelled, finally cancel it." (Bradley, p. 545) The

result of these two forces was that until the last few days before Inchon, the JCS steered a middle of the road path in which they approved the concept for an amphibious operation in the NKPA's rear, but never specifically approved of an operation at Inchon, all the while expressing grave concerns about the feasibility of the operation in a way that suggests they hoped MacArthur would change his own mind.

On 10 August a series of meetings were held at the White House in which the JCS and NCS reviewed for President Truman MacArthur's concept for an Inchon operation and again expressed their concerns. The result of those meetings was a decision to approve the concept of an amphibious assault behind North Korean lines, to release the 1st Marine Division and 3rd Infantry Division to MacArthur, but to retain the right to approve MacArthur's plans for a specific landing at Inchon.
(Bradley, p. 546)

By mid-August the JCS still had not received a formal plan for MacArthur's proposed operation, so General Collins and Admiral Forrest Sherman, Vice-Chief of Staff for Naval Operations, were dispatched to FECOM to determine MacArthur's exact plans. MacArthur, the two JCS representatives, and all service principals meet on 23 August in Tokyo. In that much reported meeting all the problems with a landing at Inchon and all the JCS concerns were reviewed. Admiral Doyle, the Navy's foremost amphibious planner in the Far East, concluded the Navy's portion of the briefing by stating that INCHON was possible, but he did not recommend it. MacArthur, choosing to

speak last, delivered what has been described as an eloquent and passionate soliloquy aimed at settling the fears of the doubters. MacArthur dismissed the alternatives to INCHON, such as the proposed landing at Kunsan, and clearly and forcefully explained why only Inchon would achieve decisive results. He recognized the hazards pointed out by the Navy and Marines, but seemed to dismiss them by stating unequivocally that, "the Navy has never turned me down yet, and I know it will not now." (Appleman, p. 494) Finally, MacArthur appeared to carry the day when he closed by saying,

If my estimate is inaccurate and should I run into a defense with which I cannot cope, I will be there personally and will immediately withdraw our forces before they are committed to a bloody setback. The only loss then will be my professional reputation. But INCHON will not fail. Inchon will succeed and it will save 100,000 lives. (Collins, p. 125)

General Collins reported that MacArthur's address had left the audience spellbound and Collins admits to being impressed, but still having reservation. Before departing Tokyo, Collins asked Brigadier James Wright, FECOM G-3, about alternative plans, specifically the one for Kunsan. Wright assured Collins that alternative plans were being prepared. A plan for a feint at Kunsan was being developed, but it could not be used as an alternative if INCHON was not conducted or failed. (Appleman, p. 494)

The reports of General Collins and Admiral Sherman still expressed the misgivings that had bothered the JCS prior to the 23 August meeting. At that time fighting around the Pusan

Perimeter was reaching a peak, the situation looked critical, and the JCS was inclined to have Inchon postponed. General Bradley contends this was not done because by that time President Truman was committed to Inchon and expressed the greatest confidence it would succeed. (Bradley, p. 547) So on 28 August the JCS sent MacArthur the following message, which approved an amphibious operation but contained qualifiers about INCHON:

We concur in making preparations and executing a turning movement by amphibious forces on the west coast of Korea either at Inchon in event that enemy defenses in vicinity of Inchon prove ineffective or at a favorable beach south of Inchon if one can be located. We further concur in preparation...for an envelopment by amphibious forces in the vicinity of Kunsan. We understand that alternative plans are being prepared in order to best exploit the situation as it develops. We desire such information as becomes available with respect to conditions in the possible objective areas and timely information as to your intentions and plans for offensive operations. (Bradley, p. 547)

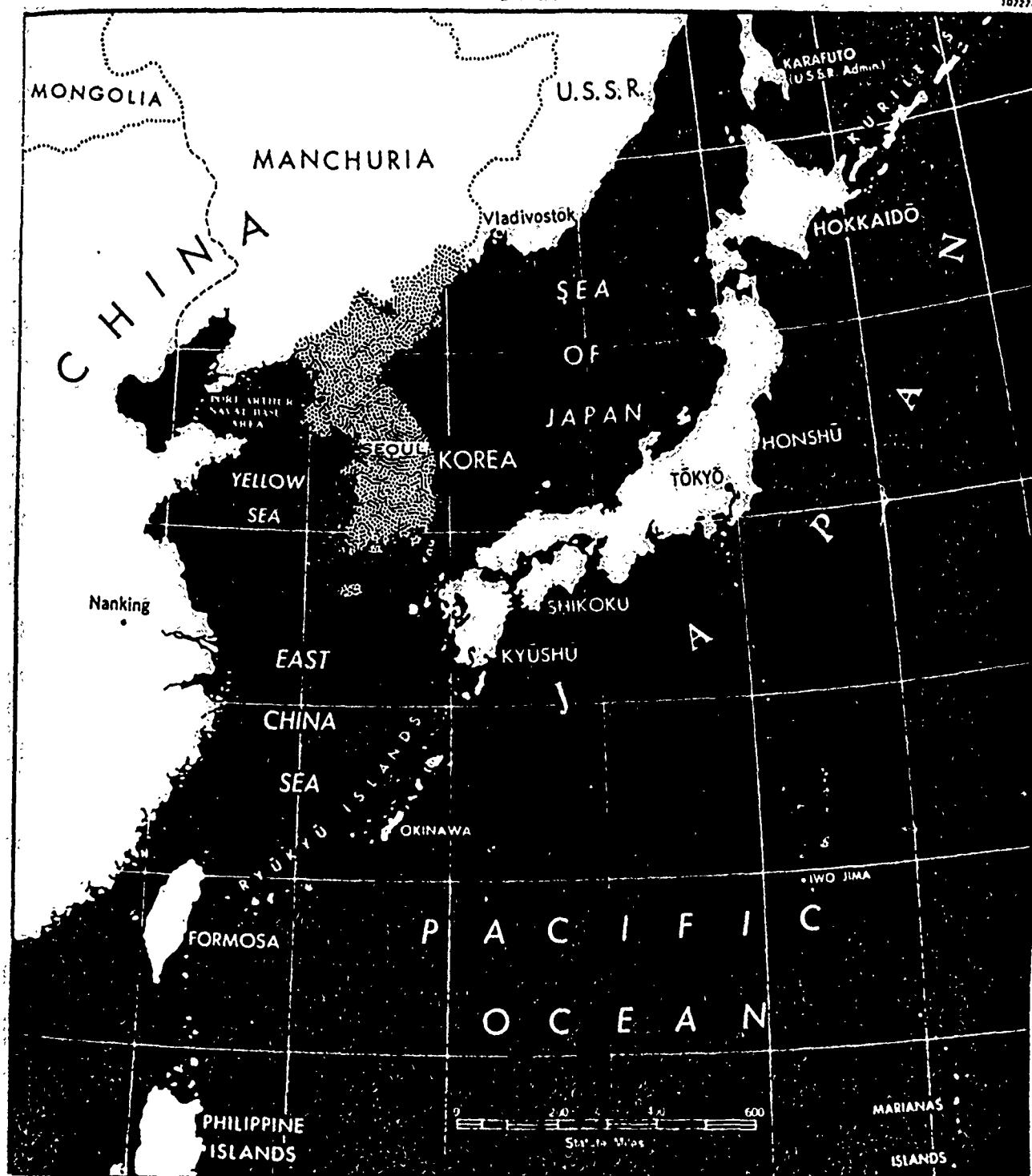
MacArthur consequently issued Operations Order No. 1, General Headquarters, United Nations Command, on 30 August, covering the details of the Inchon operation. For all intents and purposes INCHON was on at this point. Only a direct order by the JCS could have stopped it, and that was not forthcoming although there was one last exchange between the JCS and MacArthur before the JCS gave final approval for INCHON.

By 5 September the JCS had not received the information as requested on 28 August. MacArthur was radioed again and requested to send any information on modifications to his plan. MacArthur's reply was that his plans remained as outlined on 23

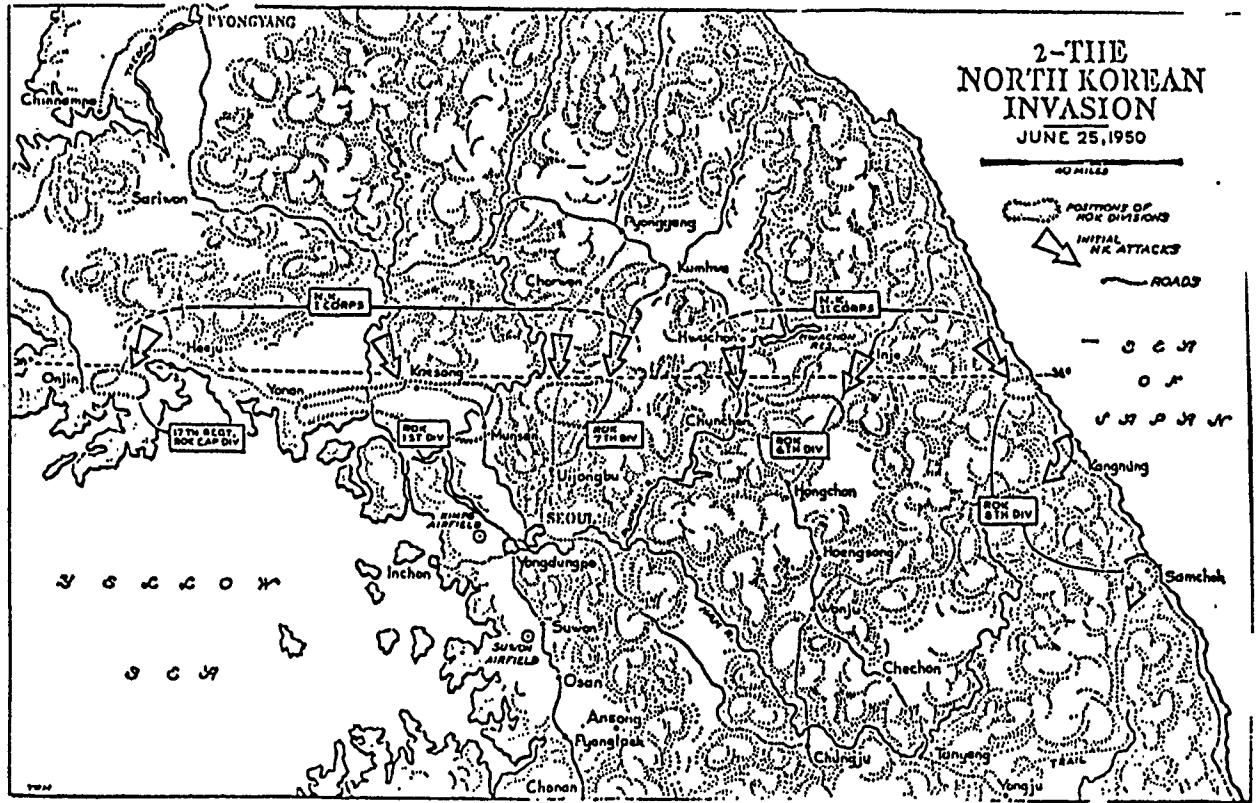
August and that he would send a courier with the detailed plan to Washington by 11 September. Bradley, with obvious anomosity, was to call this, "an act of arrogance unparalleled in my military experience," for MacArthur knew the plans would arrive too late for the JCS to make a detailed evaluation. (Bradley, p. 555) Finally, perhaps out of a sense of frustration more than anything else, and feeling they had no other option at this point, the JCS sent MacArthur a short message on 8 September stating, "We approve your plan and the President has been so informed." (Bradley, p.556)

KOREA

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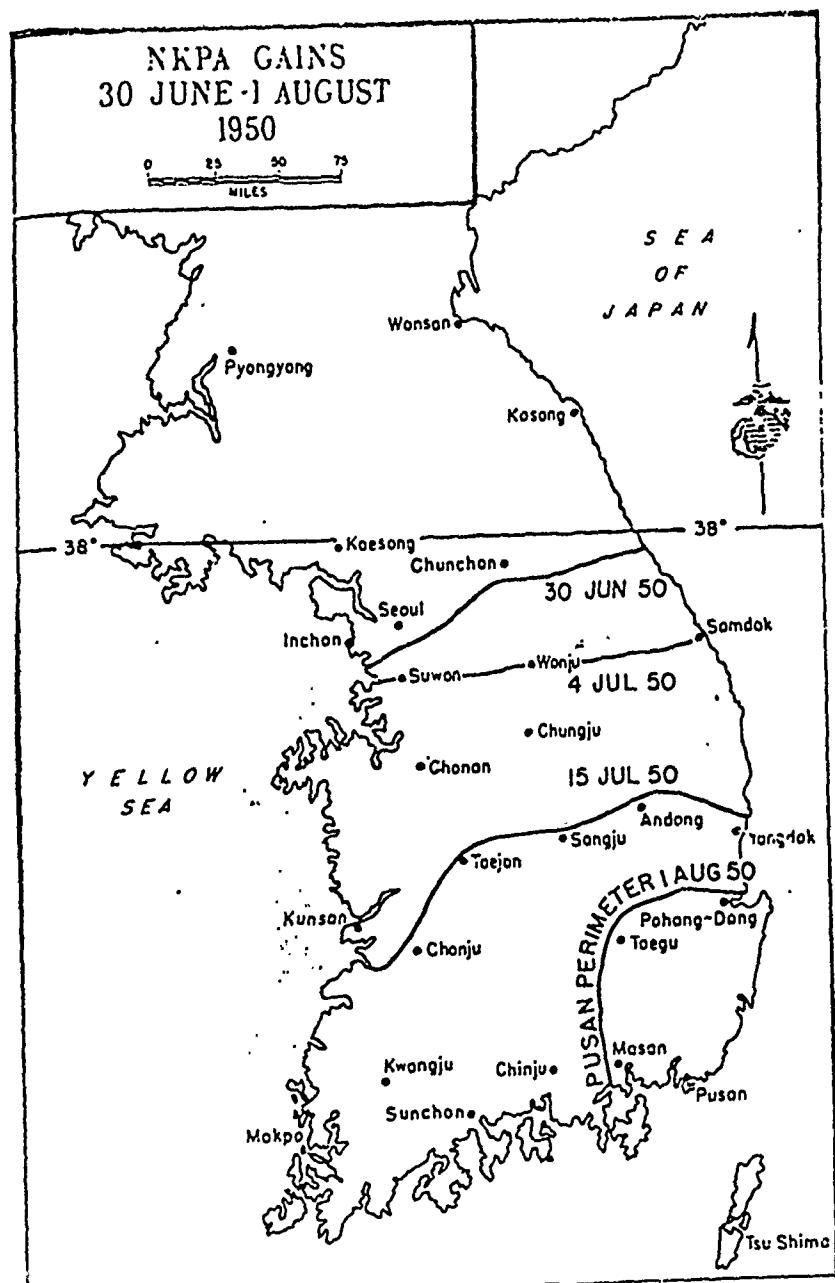


MAP II-A



MAP II-B

(COLLINS, P. 10)



MAP II - C

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 29)

III. TACTICAL SITUATION

THE AREA OF OPERATIONS

While the JCS and General MacArthur played out their scenario to determine if there would be an INCHON operation with JCS approval, staff officers in the Far East were busy preparing the detailed plans. They found in their planning that the JCS' concern about Inchon being a risky place to conduct an amphibious operation was well founded. The crux of the planning problem was how to plan for and execute an amphibious operation in an area ideally unsuited for one. As Commander Arlie G. Capps, Admiral Doyle's Gunnery Officer, said, "We drew up a list of every natural geographic handicap--and Inchon had 'em all." Commander Monroe Kelly, Doyle's Communications Officer, added, "Make up a list of amphibious don't's and you have an exact description of the Inchon operation." (Heinl, p. 24.)

The "don't's" Commander Kelly referred to were in relation to the seven criteria for a landing area listed in the 1952 version of the Navy's amphibious bible, USF-6. Those criteria were:

1. Ability of naval forces to support the assault and follow-up operations.
2. Shelter from unfavorable sea and weather.
3. Compatibility of the beaches and their approaches to the size, draft, maneuverability, and beaching characteristics of the assault ships and landing craft.

4. Offshore hydrography (water depths and bottom configuration).
5. The extent of mineable water (any depth less than 600 feet is considered mineable, although currents also affect mineability).
6. Conditions which may affect the enemy's ability to defeat mine clearance efforts by the attacking force.
7. Facilities for unloading shipping and how these may be improved. (Heinl, p. 26)

The first significant problem with the Inchon area was the approach that an amphibious force would have to take. The main sea approach is from the south via two channels which are fifty miles long, narrow, and only 6-10 fathoms deep (36-60 feet). Flying Fish Channel, called the main channel and ordinarily used by larger ships, is narrow and twisting and has been likened to a dead end street with little if any sea room to maneuver. There are many points in the channel where a sunken or disabled vessel could block the channel and trap a force. Finally, the channels are commanded by several heights and islands that are well suited for shore batteries and despite rapid currents, the channels are eminently mineable. (Appleman, p. 498; Heinl, pp. 25-26)

As the channel approaches Inchon harbor one is confronted dead ahead by the toad shaped, hilly island of Wolmi-do, which is connected to a smaller island, Sowolmi-do, by a causeway. These islands dominate the harbor, divide it in two, mask most of the city of Inchon, and block the entrance to the inner harbor, and are well suited for the positioning of shore batteries. Inchon city itself sat on a hilly promontory which was dissected by small flat streams and backed by hilly, rough

terrain. This meant that Wolmi-do and its smaller companion would have to be seized before a landing could be conducted at Inchon itself. (Heinl, p. 26; Headquarters, X Corps, p. 4)

Inchon's extreme tides are its most distinctive characteristic. Inchon's tidal range is about thirty-two feet. When the tide is out it exposes wide, gray, oozing mud flats which extend into the harbor as far as three to five miles. Any vessel caught by a receding tide would be beached on the mud flats and exposed to enemy fire. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 4)

A tidal height of twenty-three feet would be required for LCVPs (land craft, vehicles and personnel) and the LCMs (landing craft, mechanized). The LSTs (landing ships, tank) would require twenty-nine feet. Tidal heights of this depth occurred at Inchon only once a month. The tidal range for September was projected to be 31.2 feet at high tide and .5 feet at low tide. On 15 September, high tide would come at 0659 hours, forty-five minutes after sunrise. The next high tide would not occur until 1919 hours, just twenty-seven minutes before sunset. One could expect the critical depth of 23 feet, set by the Navy, to last for approximately three hours. (Appleman, p. 499; Heinl, p. 27)

What these tidal patterns meant to the planners was that they were restricted in their choice of both day and time of day to conduct the operation. Their flexibility to develop multiple courses of action had been taken away by the geography. Further, the time duration to accomplish specific tasks, such as put forces ashore, was very constrained. This had an impact not

only on the landing, but also on the ability to sustain the operation.

A beach in military terminology is a part of a shoreline designated for the landing of a tactical organization. The three designated beaches in the Inchon area were spread out on a four mile arc around the Inchon waterfront. They consisted mainly of piers and seawalls and offered few of the common characteristics of a beach. Admiral Doyle's planners color coded these beaches and described them as follows:

1. Green Beach: a 200-yard strip on the northwest shore of Wolmi-do, described in one intelligence study as "sand, with patches of rocks," but more truthfully, rocks with patches of sand, sacked by a low revetment and a ridge.
2. Red Beach: 220 yards of seawall, running north from the main land root of the causeway which joins Inchon to Wolmi-do.
3. Blue Beach: an area on the other side of Inchon - four miles southeast of Red Beach - with 14-foot seawall, backed by salt pans or by a precipitous terraced, though partly eroded, hillock approached over some 4,500 yards of mud flats. (Heinl, p. 26)

RED Beach presented a unique problem. Instead of landing on a beach on which they could establish themselves and move inland, the Marines would be assaulting directly into a major urban area. Inchon in 1950 was a city of approximately 200,000 and would present all the problems of communications, coordination, mobility, and fields of fire that one would expect in a built-up area.

When Inchon's characteristics are compared to USF-6's list of seven criteria for an amphibious landing area, the difficulty and risk of such an operation at Inchon is apparent. Inchon met

only one, possibly, of the criteria in that it is a protected, ice free harbor. (Headquarters, X Corps, pp. 3-4)

The Seoul-Inchon area is one of the few lowland areas of mountainous Korea. Seoul, a city of 2,000,000 in 1950, sits at the head of most transportation and communications arteries in Korea. Topographic corridors which contain rail and highway systems radiate from Seoul to the east, north, and south. A force which controls Seoul controls the transportation arteries. (X Corps, p. 5)

Seoul sits on the east bank of the Han River about eighteen miles from Inchon. The Han in the Seoul area is 200-500 yards wide, but the river channel is 1000 yards wide. The current is moderate to swift and the banks are steep and frequently defiled. The Han is the major military barrier between Seoul and Inchon. Prior to 23 June, one could cross the Han from Inchon or Kimpo via three highway bridges. The bridges were destroyed, however, on 28 June by the retreating South Koreans. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 4; Heinl, pp. 28-29)

On the west bank of the Han River directly across from Seoul is the town of Yongdungpo. The land west of the Han to Inchon is relatively gentle with rolling hills 300 to 1,500 feet high. The valley areas are dotted with rice paddies, which are restrictive to cross country movements. The main roads from Inchon to Seoul, one through Kimpo and one through Yongdungpo, wind between the hill bases and rice paddies. (Headquarters, X Corps, pp. 3-4; Heinl, pp. 28-29)

Kimpo airfield sits about a mile west of the Han River

north of the main Inchon-Seoul axis. In 1950, Kimpo airfield was a 6,000 foot hard-surfaced runway with a load capacity of 120,000 pounds. Kimpo airfield was the most important airfield in South Korea and would be critical to logistical operations.

(Heinl, pp. 28-29)

COMPARISON OF OPPOSING FORCES

The UN ground, naval, and air forces that would conduct INCHON were tasked organized under the operational command of Combined Joint Task Forces-7 (CJTF-7), which was officially created by order of FECOM on 20 August 1950. CJTF-7 was commanded by Admiral Arthur D. Struble, who also commanded the Navy's Seventh Fleet. The units assigned to CJTF-7 were organized into seven subordinate task forces (TF) as follows:

TF 90	Attack Force, Rear Adm. James H. Doyle, USN
TF 92	X Corps, Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, USA
TF 99	Patrol & Reconnaissance Force, Rear Adm. G. R. Henderson, USN
TF 91	Blockade & Covering Force, Rear Adm. W. G. Andrews, RN
TF 77	Fast Carrier Force, Rear Adm. E. C. Ewen, USN
TF 79	Logistic Support Force, Capt. B. L. Austin, USN
TF 70.1	Flagship Group, Capt. E. L. Woodyard, USN (Field, p. 180)

For naval forces, CJTF-7 would have over 230 ships from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, the Republic of Korea, and numerous merchantmen to include thirty-four Japanese vessels skippered by former Japanese Naval Officers. Except for a few line vessels left to

provide gunnery support for the Pusan Perimeter, CJTF-7 included all of the combatant units available in the Far East. The bulk of the ships, to include 120 transports of all types to carry TF- 92, the X Corps, were assigned to TF-90, the Attack Force. The combatant vessels of TF-90 included two carriers, four cruisers, seventeen destroyers, and three rocket launch ships. The majority of the rest of the combatant ships were assigned to TF- 77, TF-91, and TF-99. They included four carriers, two cruisers, and twenty-two destroyers. (Field, p. 181)

The ground force that would conduct INCHON was the United States X Corps. General MacArthur had secured the major units that would comprise X Corps and planning was well underway for INCHON before X Corps Headquarters was activated on 26 August 1950. The Marines and Navy preferred that the Commander of the 1st Marine Division, Major General Oliver P. Smith, who was a veteran of several amphibious campaigns in the Pacific during WW II, be the corps commander. MacArthur, however designated Major General Edward M. Almond, the Chief of Staff of FECOM, to be commander of X Corps. One of the many unique features of INCHON is that Almond retained this position of Chief of Staff while he commanded X Corps. Most principal staff officers of the Corps came from FECOM Headquarters and as a group lacked amphibious training and experience. The X Corps War Diary states this was done initially as a deception to hide the creation of the X Corps staff. (Appleyman, pp. 489-490; Headquarters, X Corps, p. 7; Heinl, p. 45, 54)

The major combat units of X Corps were the 1st Marine

Division and the Army's 7th Infantry Division. In mid 1950 it was no easy task to raise two full strength divisions. The regiments that comprised the 1st Marine Division had to be drawn from many sources and one of the regiments did not arrive in time to participate in the initial assault. The 7th Infantry Division had to be filled with South Korean draftees.

Recall that in early July the JCS had approved MacArthur's request for a Marine brigade to be sent to Korea. As a result the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was created at Camp Pendleton from the 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division and Marine Air Group 33 of the 1st Marine Air Wing and sailed for Korea on 14 July. It had been MacArthur's intent to use the brigade in Operation BLUEHEARTS, but when that was cancelled and the situation around the Pusan Perimeter became critical, the brigade was committed to that battle. The brigade performed so well that General Walker was reluctant to give it up for INCHON and it took the personal direction of MacArthur to get the brigade released from duty in the Eighth Army. The brigade was withdrawn ten days prior to INCHON and assigned to the 1st Marine Division as the 5th Marine Regiment. It was the only unit at INCHON that had Korean War experience.

To create the second regiment for the 1st Marine Division, and fillout the divisional support units, the Marine Corps transferred 6,800 regulars of the 2nd Marine Division from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to Camp Pendleton. In addition, with presidential authority, the Marines called to active duty its entire Organized Ground Reserve consisting of

138 units with a strength of 1,800 officers and 31,648 enlisted. These troops started reporting on 31 July, were organized into the 1st Marine Regiment, and by 18 August they had been equipped, trained and were sailing for Korea.

(Appleman, p. 491; Montross and Canzona, pp. 18-35)

The final regiment for the Division, activated as the 7th Marines on 17 August at Camp Pendleton, consisting of a peace-strength battalion of the 2d Marine Division stationed in the Mediterranean and two understrength battalions of the 6th Marines from Camp Lejeune. All three battalions were brought to full war-strength with replacements from individual regulars and reserves still reporting in at Camp Pendleton. These units were equipped and trained by 3 September when they sailed for Korea. The 7th Marines were not to arrive until 21 September and did not participate in the initial landing at Inchon. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 32-35; Heinl, pp. 35-38)

On 15 September the 1st Marine Division had a strength of 25,040 men - 19,494 organic, 2,760 Army troops attached, and 2,786 Korean Marines attached. With the arrival of the 7th Marines, the division's strength increased by 4,000. (Appleman, p. 503)

In June 1950 the 7th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General David G. Barr, was performing occupation duty in Japan and was garrisoned on the island of Honshu and Hokkaido. The division, which was understrength to begin with, was stripped of 140 officers and 1500 enlisted men to strengthen the units fighting in Korea. By 27 July, the division had only 9,117 men

of a required 16,500 man strength. The most critical shortages were in trained officers and noncommissioned officers, so the shortages were worse than the dismal numbers portrayed. To strengthen the division, FECOM allotted its entire infantry replacement stream from 23 August to 3 September and the entire artillery replacement stream from 23 August to 8 September to the division. Service units were obtained for the division by the same method--diversions from assignments to Eighth Army. By 4 September the division had received 390 officers and 5,400 enlisted men. (Appleman, p. 491; 7th Infantry Division Historical Council, pp. 14-15)

The division was still far from full strength, so MacArthur ordered the Eighth Army to procure, screen, and ship approximately 7,000 able bodied Koreans to Japan to be integrated into the division. The Eighth Army sent 8,637. They arrived at the 7th Division in an assortment of civilian clothes, confused, and exhausted. The division quarantined them for fourteen days to give them medical exams and outfit them. The greatest supply shortage turned-out to be tennis shoes since the Koreans refused to wear combat boots. Since most of the Koreans spoke little English, the 7th Division decided to use the buddy system to integrate them into the division. So each Korean was integrated at the squad level with an American buddy. (Appleman, p. 492; 7th Infantry Division Historical Council, pp. 14-15)

It is to the 7th Division's credit that they were able to absorb all these replacements, both American and Korean, while

conducting an amphibious training program scattered between Camp Fuji, Camp McNair, Camp Drew, and Camp Zama. The quality of replacements the division had received from the United States was generally high and solid training was provided by noncommissioned officers sent over from Ft. Benning and Ft. Sill. By 15 September the division was reasonably prepared for its mission and had an embarkation strength of 24,845.

(Appleman, p. 492; 7th Division Historical Council, p. 15)

In his book Victory at High Tide, Robert Heinl, Jr. reports that at the start of the operation,

Headquarters of the In Min Sun were in Seoul, as was all the motley off line-of-communication troops required to keep supplies and replacements moving south, and Seoul was infested with the police cadres charged with re-educating the inhabitants of the South Korean capital.

The military garrison of Seoul, the 18th Rifle Division ("Seoul Defense Division") numbered some 10,000 officers and men. This division was reinforced by the Seoul City Regiment, an infantry unit 3,600 strong. In keeping with Communist practice, the city had a proficient antiaircraft defense force, the 19th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment, a 1,200-man unit armed with Russian 85mm, 37mm automatic cannon, and the 12.7mm machine guns used with painful effect against US Aircraft in Vietnam. Principal among the logistic troops was a 900-man railroad security and operating regiment (10th Railroad Regiment), while the hated 36th Battalion, 111th Security Regiment, pried, proselyted and purged as seemed best in the interest of the Korean Peoples Republic.

Aside from some 19 propeler-driven Yaks and Stormoviks which were all the In Min Gun could still operate at increasing peril, the North Korean forces at Kimpo were what might be expected: an Air Division-the 1st (likely the only)-providing base personnel and services; the 107th Security Regiment, a 2,500-man guard force here rather than a political unit; and the 877th Air Force Unit, 400 people whose exact function will never be clear because they went their separate way soon after the battle was joined. The Kimpo base commander was a tough, Chinese-trained brigadier, Wan Yong.

At Inchon, the extent of the defense forces and their preparations-at least as of August 1950 - indicated that the

NKPA's intelligence staff must have shared the views of many American opposite number as to the feasibility of a landing. The garrison of Inchon consisted of two raw battalions of new conscripts, some 2,000 of them, in the 226th Marine Regiment, and two harbor-defense batteries of 76mm guns (eight in all) manned by 200 gunners of the 918th Coast Artillery. The engineers had worked out plans for eventual development of suitable defenses at Inchon and Wolmi-do. Russian land mines were to be laid, trenches and emplacements dug, training was proceeding, and additional weapons and ammunition were coming in via the railroad yards just ashore from Wolmi-do. While Inchon harbor was to be mined, work had not yet commenced.

(Heinl, pp. 30-31)

The Headquarters, X Corps War Diary further defined the estimated enemy strength, in the area of operations as follows:

Enemy forces in the Inchon-Seoul area consisted principally of a major headquarters, a replacement center, anti-aircraft defenses, operating personnel for an airfield, a minor port, coastal defenses, and an army garrison force. In addition, in this area the North Koreans drafted replacements for North Korean forces; however, the state of training and mental attitude of these hastily mobilized "recruits" did little to increase enemy potential in the objective area... The total enemy strength in Seoul was estimated to consist of approximately 5,000 troops; enemy strength at Inchon was reported on 25 July as 1,000; enemy strength at Kimpo Airfield estimated at about 500; enemy strength at Uijohbu, undetermined, consisted of a "large" replacement training center. The 107th Regiment occupied three locations northeast of Seoul. Enemy forces, capable of reinforcing the Inchon-Seoul objective area, consisted of uncommitted reserve divisions in rear of the line of contact with EUSAK, line-of-communication type regiments in occupied territory, and small garrison forces still located in North Korea. The enemy was incapable of organizing additional combat divisions of the standard engaging EUSAK. However, provisional regimental combat teams, brigades, or defensive commands were within his capability for reinforcement.

(Headquarters, X Corps, p. 5)

Lynn Montrose and Nicholas Canzona, in US Marine Operations in Korea Vol II, stated that, in addition to the forces described above, the following forces were engaged by the 1st Marine Division during INCHON:

42nd Mech (Tank) Regiment	between Inchon and Seoul consisting of 500 troops and 18 T-34 Tanks;
3rd Regt, 9th Rifle Div	near Yongdung with a strength of 2,000;
25th Inf Brigade 43rd Tank Regt.	Seoul with a strength of 5,000; Seoul with a strength of 500 and 15 T-34 Tanks;
76th Inf Regt, 42nd Div 78th Inf Regt. 523th Art. Regt.	Seoul with a strength of 3,000 Seoul with a strength of 2,000 Seoul with 1,500 troops, 1 76mm and 5 45mm guns;
2nd Regt, 17th Rifle Div	Seoul-Uijongbu with 3,500 troops.

These NKPA units combined to give the enemy a strength of nearly 38,000 troops. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 325-326)

It was estimated that enemy forces capable of reinforcing the Inchon-Seoul area consisted of uncommitted reserve divisions in the rear of the line of contact with the Eighth US Army, most likely the 3rd, 13th and 10th Divisions, line of communications regiments in occupied territory, and garrison units which were still located in North Korea. The enemy was deemed incapable of raising any further first line divisions. (Appleman, p. 500; Headquarters, X Corps, p. 6)

In September 1950, the North Korean naval elements were not a threat to the operation. Their Navy consisted of five divisions of small PT type vessels and were bottled up in ports by the United Nations naval forces. (Appleman, p. 500)

Information on the training and morale of the NKPA units opposing the UN forces is not available except for speculation on the part of the engaged forces based on the fight they encountered. For example, it is believed that the 226th Marine

Regiment in Inchon was composed of two battalions of new and untrained conscripts. The following information on the NKPA personnel procurement and training is synthesized from POW reports as compiled in Intelligence Reports, North Korean Forces, by General Headquarters Far East Command in 1950.

A drastic program of forced conscription was conducted by the NKPA in the Republic of Korea to fulfill military manpower needs directly attributable to enormous combat losses and to allow North Korean conscriptees to fill the ranks of new units necessitated by the intervention of UN Forces. The urgency of this program was clearly reflected by the integration of ROK civilians with little or no military training or political indoctrination into combat units with no apparent regard for the detrimental effect engendered on the combat efficiency of the organization involved.

Prior to the invasion, new conscriptees received no training at all or were provided six weeks of inadequate training in which basic weapon training was conducted with wooden rifles climaxed by the firing of two or three rounds of live ammunition.

Once the invasion was underway, the fact that the enemy was able to assemble, equip and train new divisions while maintaining a continuous replacement stream to front line units indicated:

(1) That replacements for units already in action were being obtained almost exclusively through the forced induction of untrained ROK civilians while North Korean conscriptees were utilized as fillers for newly-created organizations.

(2) That the establishment of trained replacement pools was accomplished prior to the war, inadvertently or otherwise, by the organization of the so-called Border Constabulary units and the creation of a Civil Defense Corps (reserves).

(3) That replacements in significant numbers were continuing to reach the front despite the hampering effect of UN air and naval action and transport media and lines of communication.

(4) That the NKPA personnel replacement system was based on the rear-to-front impetus and did not require requisitions on established replacement centers.

The NKPA had a complete training program for officers and NCO's consisting of military academies, officer candidate schools, and NCO schools. In addition, branch schools were available for signal, artillery, engineer, armor, and political. In most cases, as the conflict progressed, the length of training at these institutions decreased drastically.

Based on the above information, most probably the NKPA forces initially occupying the Inchon-Seoul area were poorly trained and composed primarily of North Korean conscripts. Only after the landing, when other NKPA forces came to reinforce the area, did X Corps forces face well trained and experienced enemy forces.

At the battle for Inchon-Seoul, both US and NKPA forces were armed with WW II vintage weapons. The North Korean arsenal was almost entirely supplied by the Soviet Union and consisted of new and reconditioned equipment. A comparison of major weapon systems is provided below: (Heinl, p. 291)

WEAPON	US	NKPA
Rifle	7.62 mm (30 cal)	7.62mm
Squad Machine Gun	7.62mm	7.62mm
	BAR (30 cal)	
Heavy Machine Gun	50 Cal	12.7mm
Anti-Tank Weapon	2.36in Rocket 3.5in Rocket 75mm Recoilless	14.5mm AT Rifle 45mm AT Gun

Mortar	60mm 81mm 4.2in	82mm 102mm
Artillery	105mm 155mm	76mm 122mm
Tank	Light M-26 Pershing	T-34 (85mm)

The following provides a comparison of weapons by quantity.

US quantities are from Robert Heinl Jr's Victory at High Tide and were for some 70,000 X Corps soldiers. The North Korean quantities are based on 37,380 troops, and on reports of captured or destroyed weapons in the Far East Command's Interrogation Reports:

WEAPON	MARINE	ARMY	US TOTAL	NPKA
Rifle	18,488	14,378	32,866	22,000
Pistol	3,196	2,769	5,964	630
Machine Gun (IND)	1,002	512	1,414	5,000
Machine Gun (Sq)	629	200	829	1,200
Machine Gun (Hy)	187	354	541	650
AT Weapon	388	585	973	460
Mortar	159	160	319	330
Tank	100	144	244	35
Howitzer	72	72	144	110

The technological differences between the opposing forces were in tanks and aircraft. In both cases the United Nations forces had the advantage. The Soviet T-34 tank had a hand-cranned turret while the Pershing's turret was power driven. This difference gave the Pershing an advantage in speed of engagement. The NPKA air forces were practically non-existent while the Marine Corsairs operating from carriers gave total air superiority and close air support to the UN forces.

Logistics was what the landing at Inchon was all about. In

a message the JCS on 8 September 1950 General MacArthur said:

The seizure of the heart of the enemy distributing system in the Seoul area will completely dislocate the logistical supply of his forces now operating in South Korea and therefore will ultimately result in their disintegration. This indeed, is the primary purpose of this movement. Caught between our northern and southern forces, both of which are completely self-sustaining because of our absolute air and naval supremacy, the enemy cannot fail to be ultimately shattered through disruption of his logistical support and our combined combat activities. (Appleman, p. 495)

The success of INCHON depended on sustaining the landing force. This required resupply by sea (Inchon) and air (Kimpo) which meant securing both locations. Although the UN forces enjoyed absolute air and naval supremacy, careful planning and execution were required to succeed. The tidal situation at the port of Inchon is such that the landing force could not be resupplied except at high tide until such a time as the port was secured and port facilities operational. Therefore, for the initial assault eight LSTs were loaded with supplies (100 tons of general supplies, 50 tons of ammunition, 35 tons of rations and 15 tons of water) and beached abreast for the entire duration of each low tide. In addition, because the wounded could not be evacuated, two of the LSTs served as hospitals. Although this was not normal procedure, it was decided to accept the possible loss of these vessels in the interest of adequate logistic support to the ground forces. Also, air and naval fire had to be controlled to limit damage to key port facilities to insure the earliest possible reestablishment of the port. As a result, the Port of Inchon

was partially operational by D + 2 with the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade in control and Kimpo airfield was captured and operational by D + 3. (Walker, pp. 36-38)

As synthesized in the Far East Command's Interrogation Reports, the NKPA supply system was characterized by rigid adherence to well-defined concepts, primarily of Soviet origin. Supply was not a staff, but a command function, with the chief of rear services as deputy to the unit commander. The NKPA relied heavily on rail transport because of a lack of roads able to withstand heavy military traffic and a lack of other means of transportation in rear areas. The North Koreans used the push concept to supply with impetus from rear to front and higher to lower. Priorities regulated the flow of supplies with class III and V taking precedence.

The NKPA obtained supplies from five sources. The majority of their heavy equipment was supplied by the Soviet Union. Many of the NKPA formerly served with the CCF Eighth Route Army and brought their equipment with them and China continued to supply some mortars, artillery and machine guns, submachine guns and small arms ammunition were produced in North Korea. Captured ROK stocks of arms and uniforms were used when supplies from the north were no longer available. Finally, the bulk of rations were obtained by local procurement and often paid for by ROK currency.

The NKPA used several supply routes to resupply their forces. An estimated two-thirds of the total volume bound for the southern front moved through Seoul. The remainder moved via

Wonju or along the east coast.

PLANS AND MISSIONS-UN FORCES

General MacArthur's intent was clear. Through the use of strategic maneuver, "We shall land at Inchon, and... shall crush them." (Appleman, p. 488)

To accomplish this goal, CJTF-7 would have to establish and maintain naval and air superiority in the Inchon area, conduct an amphibious assault on Inchon to introduce ground units into the area, secure a beachhead line at Inchon and move quickly to seize Kimpo airfield, cross the Han River and seize Seoul, and establish blocking positions around Seoul to provide the "anvil" against which the Eighth Army, advancing from the south, would crush the NKPA. This was the concept and tasks outlined in FECOM Operation Plan No 100-B (Operation Plan CHROMITE) published on 12 August 1950. (Almond, p. 10)

Robert Heinl Jr. contends in Victory at High Tide that the development of supporting subordinate plans did not follow the classical planning process in which the plans of subordinate units are developed in response to the plans of their higher headquarters. The plans and orders of TF-90 and the 1st Marine Division, who would conduct the initial assault, dominated the planning process. The 1st Marine Division's Operation Plan No 2 was published 27 August. X Corps' Operation Order 1, although dated 28 August, was not published until 30 August, after X Corp's staff reviewed the 1st Marine

plan. Lynn Montross and Nicholas Canzona point out in US Marine Operations in Korea, Vol II that X Corps concentrated its planning on the exploitation phase following the seizure of the beachhead. (Heinl, p. 49; Montross and Canzona, p. 62)

One questions how big an issue to make of this? Heinl, and other sources, do not examine in detail what coordination was exercised between X Corps and 1st Marine Division Staff. One would have to conclude that there was appropriate coordination for the plans to have been as supportive as they were. One must wonder, in view of the time available to plan, if the mission would have been accomplished if traditional procedures had been strictly followed. Navy doctrine in 1950 called for a minimum of 160 days to plan an amphibious operation of this size and INCHON had to be planned and executed in two and one-half months. In retrospect what happened in planning INCHON appears to resemble current joint operations planning procedures in which the joint staff and component staffs develop plans simultaneously and modify the plans as required while planning is in progress.

The characteristics of the area of operation always influence, to some degree, the feasible courses of action that planners can develop and analyze. The characteristics of INCHON, unique and hostile to amphibious operations, nearly dictated the manner in which the operation would be conducted. In analyzing the problem, Navy and Marine planners determined that a night time approach up the narrow, shallow Flying Fish

Channel was too dangerous except for a small force. This meant a four hour daylight approach would have to be made by the main force. Another problem was working around the two high tides of the day. The first high tide was at 0659 hours and the second at 1919 hours, and each would provide the operational depth of twenty-three feet for about three hours. The last major problem - there were many more small ones to solve - was the necessity to take Wolmi-do island before the main assault on Inchon could be conducted. Since three hours was insufficient time to conduct an assault on Wolmi-do, secure it, and conduct the main assault, it meant the two assaults would have to be conducted. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 62-64)

After considering all these factors the Navy and Marine planners determined the only feasible course of action was to assault Wolmi-do in the morning with a battalion landing team, secure Wolmi-do during the day, and conduct the main assault on the evening tide supported and covered by the force on Wolmi-do. One problem that this concept would present is that the main assault would have very little daylight with which to work. The concept represented a trading-off of risk, but there was little other choice. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 62-64)

The operation was to be initiated by the 1st Marine Division, which was responsible for initially seizing the port of Inchon and securing a beachhead. Thereupon, the division was expected to advance rapidly and seize Kimpo Airfield. Once secure, the 1st Marine Division was tasked to cross the Han River, seize and occupy Seoul (until relieved by the 17 ROK

Regiment) and establish blocking positions north, northeast and east of Seoul. The division was also responsible for securing the corps left (north) flank enroute to Seoul. (Almond, p. 10)

The amphibious assault would begin with a landing on Wolmi-do (GREEN Beach) by a battalion landing team (the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines of the 1st Marine Division) on the early morning high tide at L-hour (0630 hours), D-day. Their mission was to secure Wolmi-do prior to the main landing by the balance of the division. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 7) This step was essential because of the commanding position of the island in relation to the Inchon shoreline. The assault on Wolmi-do was also used as an indicator of the enemy's ability to defend himself against a full scale amphibious assault. (Langley, p. 77) With Wolmi-do secure, the main landing was to be made that afternoon at the next high tide, at H-hour (1730 hours), D-day.

(Map III-A)

The 5th Marine Regimental Combat Team (RCT), less the 3d Battalion, was to conduct the main attack over Red Beach into the heart of Inchon. (Map III-B) This would be accomplished under the cover of the 3d Battalion on Wolmi-do. The primary task of the 5th RCT was to seize the dominant terrain, a series of 3 hills on the near side of Inchon, secure an initial beachhead (line 0-A), link up with the 1st RCT and expand the beachhead to lines 0-1 and 0-2. The 5th RCT was to be prepared to continue operations to the east in coordination with the 1st RCT. (Montross and Carazona, p. 54)

Simultaneous with the 5th RCT landing, the 1st RCT was to

assault over Blue Beach, link up with the 5th RCT to the north, secure a bridgehead (line 0-1) and attack east toward Yongdungpo. One of the major tasks of the 1st RCT was to rapidly cut the single overland approach/exit to the seaport. This would prevent escape and reinforcement, and present the Inchon NKPA garrison with the grim alternative of early flight, capitulation or strangulation. The 1st RCT mission was complicated by the requirement to stretch southward to link up with the Eighth Army, in the event of misfortune to the 7th Infantry Division. (Langley, pp. 86-89; Montross and Canzona, p. 64)

Two battalions of the 11th RCT, the division's artillery, were tasked to land on Wolmi-do, occupy positions, and support by fire the seizure of the beachhead at Inchon. Attached to the 11th RCT would be the Army's 96th Field Artillery Battalion. Priority of fires would go to the 1st RCT. (Montross and Canzona, p. 64)

The remaining units of the 1st Marine Division were assigned the following missions in accordance with the completed Landing Force Plan:

ROK Marines, initially in Division reserve, to land over Beach Red on call and conduct operations to occupy the city of Inchon in coordination with RCT-5.

1st Tank Bn (-) (Reinforced) to be prepared to land on order one company in LSU on Beach Green, remainder of battalion on order on beaches to be designated.

1st Engr Bn (-) to land on Beach Red or in harbor on order, assume control of detached companies on order, and support seizure of beachhead as directed. Priority to opening and maintaining MSR along southern edge of the city to RCT-1 zone of action.

1st Shore Party Bn (-) to land on order on Beach Red

or in harbor and assume control of shore party activities on Beaches Red and Green.

1st Amph Trac Bn to transport and land elements of RCT-1 on Beach Blue and continue support of RCT-1 until released.

2d Engr Brig, USA (Reinf.) to furnish ships platoons and augment Division shore party as requested. After landing and when directed, to assume operational control of Division shore party and responsibility for control of all port operations. To provide logistical support of 1st MarDiv. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 64-65)

The 7th Infantry Division and remaining corps troops were to land administratively from the second and third echelon Navy convoys. They would land sometime after D- day when a beachhead of sufficient size to accommodate the division had been secured by the Marines. The 7th Infantry Division was given the mission of protecting the Corp's right (south) flank and expanding the beachhead to the south of Seoul as far as Osan if necessary. This was to be accomplished by securing the high ground south of Seoul and the south bank of the Han River, then conducting a reconnaissance in force to the south. There, on a line from Suwon to Kyongan-ni, the 7th Infantry Division, along with the 1st Marine Division would form the "anvil" against which the Eighth Army, attacking from the south would crush the NKPA. (Montross and Canzona, p. 58)

The 1st Marine Air Wing (MAW), temporarily designated the Tactical Air Command, X Corps, operating first from carriers, then from Kimpo Airfield, would provide tactical air support. In addition, the 1st MAW would furnish air direction and warning, and be prepared to operate, on order, a control center ashore. (Heini, p. 50)

General MacArthur had approved a recommendation that the amphibious operation be supported entirely by Navy and Marine air forces. This was done to dedicate Navy and Marine aviators to support of the amphibious operation and free the 5th Air Force to support the Eighth Army exclusively. Navy and Marine air units under CJTF-7 were tasked with the preparation of the Korean west coast 150 miles north and 100 miles south of Inchon, diversionary strikes to deceive and confuse the enemy, preparation of Inchon proper and Wolmi-do, support of the landings, air defense of forces at sea and ashore, and at least five days' air interdiction of the Inchon- Seoul area. Essentially, CJTF-7 was responsible to gain air superiority and furnish deep support and interdiction strikes while the 1st Marine Air Wing provided close support for the landings and drive to Seoul. (Heinl, p. 57)

The naval missions for CJTF-7 included the following: maintain a naval blockade of the west coast of Korea, south of latitude 30 degrees 35 minutes north; conduct pre D-day naval operations as the situation might require; on D-day seize by amphibious assault, occupy, and defend a beachhead in the Inchon area; transport, land, and support follow-up and strategic reserve troops, if directed, to the Inchon area; and provide cover and support as required. Naval fire support was scheduled to begin on D-2 against the defenses at Wolmi-do. If necessary, one more day (D-1) would remain to soften up Wolmi-do and Inchon. Naval and air fires were closely integrated. For example, on D-day, from Landing (L)-45 minutes to L-2, destroyers

and cruisers were to bombard targets on Wolmi-do; from L-15 minutes to L-2, 3 LSMR's were to saturate Wolmi-do with five inch rockets; and after L-2 minutes, Marine planes were to strafe the same area. A similar progression of preparatory fires was planned for designated targets in Inchon. (Montross and Canzona, p. 69)

Other forces prepared to support the X Corps operation included the 17th ROK Infantry Regiment which was to occupy Seoul, on order, after its capture by the 1st Marine Division. The 187th Airborne RCT, located in Japan, was to prepare for airborne and ground operations, or become the X Corps reserve if required. The 3d Infantry Division was to be retained in general reserve for future employment with the X Corps. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 7)

In conjunction with the seaborne envelopment by the X Corps, the Eighth Army was to launch a major offensive out of the Pusan Perimeter and effect a juncture with the X Corps south of Seoul. The Eighth Army attack would drive in a northwesterly direction along the Taegu-Taejon-Suwon axis. The 5th Air Force was tasked to provide air support for the Eight Army breakout.

Relating missions to terrain, the initial objective of the 1st Marine Division in the port area was the key terrain feature, Wolmi-do. Its peak, Radio Hill, commanded the harbor and city. It was necessary, therefore, to seize Wolmi-do first, to reduce enemy positions on the island and provide support for the main assaults on RED and BLUE Beaches. This

objective was assigned to a battalion landing team formed around the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines.

Intermediate objectives were established for the 5th and 1st Marines landing at RED and BLUE Beaches, respectively. The initial objective for the 5th RCT was to seize the beachhead inside 0-A line. To achieve this, it would be necessary to secure three hill features; Cemetery Hill, Observatory Hill and British Consulate Hill. On Cemetery Hill, three dual purpose guns were reportedly located. The 5th RCT considered Cemetery and Observatory Hills as the most important ground to be secured in its zone. The follow-on objective of the 5th RCT was to expand the beachhead out to lines 0-1 and 0-2. Achievement of this objective would permit link-up with the 1st RCT to the south. (Appleman, p. 499)

The primary objective for the 1st Marine RCT was the beachhead encompassed within line 0-1. Within this beachhead area, several intermediate objectives were designated as follows:

2nd BATTALION (BLUE Beach One)

ABLE: This was the code name of a critical road junction, just over a thousand yards northeast of the beach which had to be seized.

DOG: This referred to Hill 117, 3,000 yards northeast of the beach, commanding Inchon's back door and the road leading to Seoul, 22 miles away. This, likewise, had to be taken urgently.

3rd BATTALION (BLUE Beach Two)

CHARLIE: A seaward tip of Hill 233, a long east-west ridge beginning 1,500 yards southeast of the beach and sealing off the stubby Murihang Peninsula which projects southward. Vitally important.

BAKER: A small cape, topped by Hill 94, to the right of objective Charlie and flanking Blue Beach. (Langley, pp. 87-88)

The Eighth Army objective was not the seizure of key terrain, but the destruction of the NKPA. General MacArthur intended to destroy them between X Corps and Eight Army in the Suwon area south of Seoul. This action was also expected to tie down all enemy forces committed against Eighth Army and prevent withdrawal from the south of major reinforcements for the North Korean units opposing X Corps in its landing area. (Appleman, p. 496)

PLANS AND MISSIONS-NORTH KOREA

The mission of The NKPA for the early part of September 1950 was the initiation of an all out offensive against UN forces within the Pusan Perimeter. The NKPA would attempt to accomplish this through a frontal attack against the Pusan Perimeter to break through the wall and exploit in the Eight Army's rear before a reserve could eject them. (Fehrenback, p. 203)

The August offensive had taken its toll on the NKPA. The NKPA's rapid advance of June had ground to a halt in August as it was running out of men and supplies. The NKPA was tired and decimated. To make matters worse, NKPA commanders were aware of the American buildup across the Pusan Perimeter during the stalemated August fighting. They understood clearly that

time was running out. Either they must penetrate the Perimeter quickly or they would never penetrate it at all. (Fehrenback, p. 204)

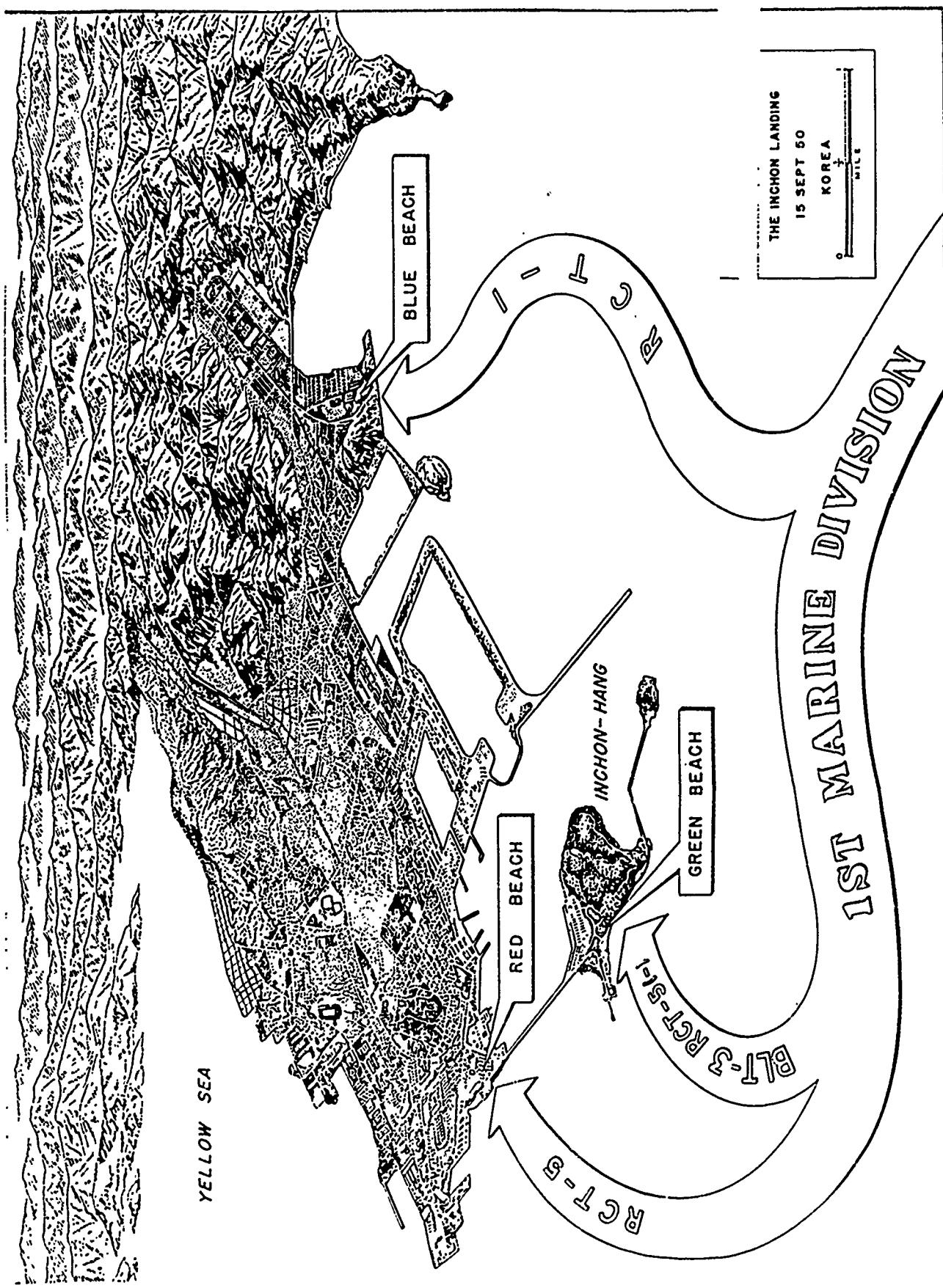
The NKPA planned a massive attack against the Pusan Perimeter for 1 September. They intended to gather all of their effective forces (98,000 men) in thirteen massive infantry divisions, one armored division, two detached armored brigades and miscellaneous security forces for a coordinated final offensive. Marshall Choe Yong Gun, directing the North Korean operation, planned to put pressure on the straining UN perimeter everywhere. His hope was that somewhere, surely, it must break. (Fehrenback, p. 204) By 20 August, both I and II Corps, NKPA, had issued their attack orders as follows:

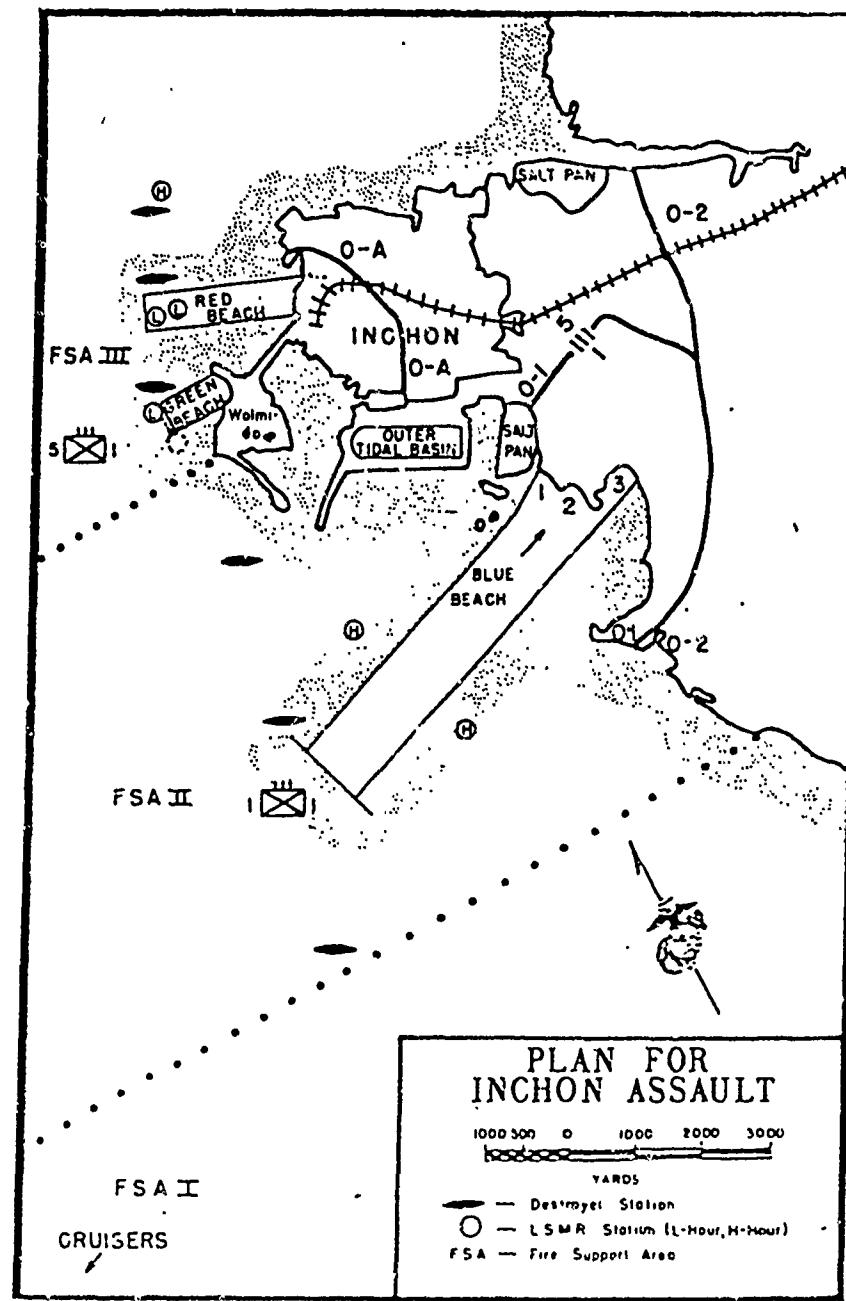
- a. 6th and 7th divisions to penetrate the U.S. 25th Division in the south.
- b. 9th, 2nd, 10th, and 4th divisions to destroy the U.S. 2nd Division before Miryang and to break through to the Pusan-Taegu Road by way of Yongsan.
- c. 3rd, 1st, and 13th divisions to break through the U.S. 1st Cavalry and 1st ROK divisions at Taegu.
- d. 8th and 5th divisions to smash ROK 8th and 6th divisions east of Taegu.
- e. 5th and 12th divisions to penetrate through the ROK 3rd and Capital divisions to P'chang-dong, Yonil and the Kyongju Corridor on the east coast. (Fehrenback, p. 204)

With 90% of its forces committed against the Pusan Perimeter, the NKPA was forced to maintain lines of communication and defend rear areas with absolute bare minimums in personnel and equipment. Rear area missions for Inchon and Seoul included: the development of coastal defenses in the Inchon area; maintenance of anti-aircraft

defenses around the Inchon-Seoul area; mining of approaches to
the port of Inchon; and, general rear area security.
(Fehrenback, p. 204)

MAP III - A

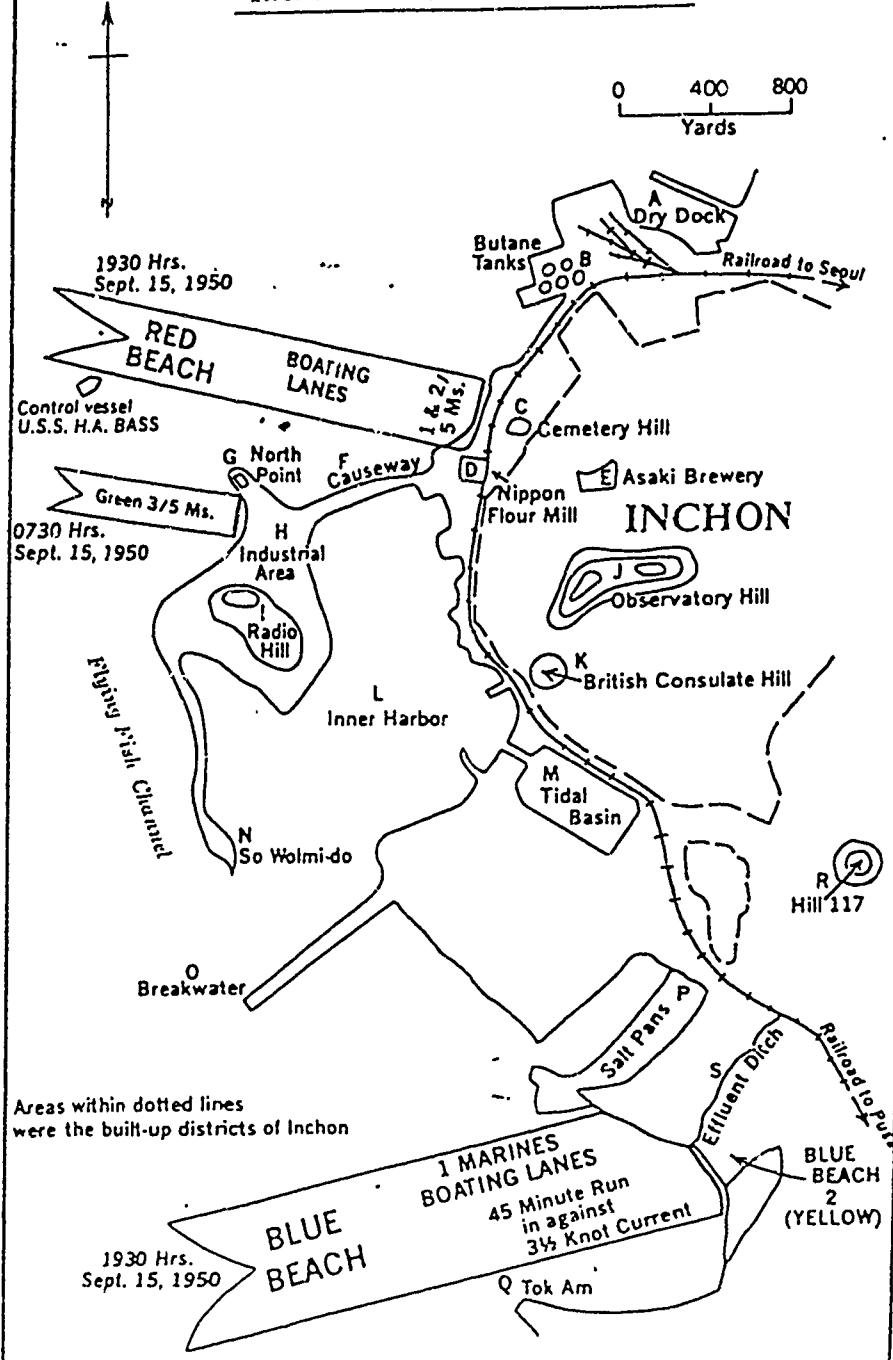




MAP III - B

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 99)

Inchon: The Invasion Beaches



MAP III - C

(LANGLEY, p. 44)

IV. THE ACTION

LOAD-OUT AND MOVEMENT

By the end of August ship loading operations were well under way. The 1st Marine Division, less the 5th Marines, loaded at Kobe. The 5th Marines would load at Pusan after being withdrawn from fighting on the Pusan Perimeter. The 7th Infantry Division embarked at Yokohama. The Navy's gunnery support element and CJTF-7's command element gathered at Sasebo. (Fehrenback, p. 242)

The loading of supplies and equipment for the 1st Marine Division had to be suspended for thirty-six hours due to Typhoon Jane which hit Kobe on 3 September. Despite the typhoon damage done to several vessels, which had to be drydocked for repairs, and a large quantity of clothing which had to be dried and repacked, the loading schedules were met. The 1st Marine Division sailed from Kobe on 11 September and the 7th Infantry Division sailed from Yokohama on the same day. The 5th Marines departed Pusan on 12 September. At 0030 hours 13 September, with General MacArthur aboard the USS MT McKinley, the command group sailed from Sasebo. (Appleman, p. 501; Fehrenbuck, p 242) The journey to the Yellow Sea rendezvous points was not calm. Many elements of the convoy had to fight their way through Typhoon Kezia, which struck off the southern end of Kyushu on 13 September; however, all elements arrived at the designated

points on time. (Appleman, p. 502)

NAVAL AND AIR PREPARATION

While the assault forces were preparing to embark, naval and air operations were under way to isolate the objective area and neutralize enemy resistance.

Air operations were intended to deceive the North Koreans as well as neutralize them. From 4 September to 10 September, numerous air attacks were conducted on Korea's east coast against Wonsan, which had been considered a likely landing objective. Kunsan, which was on the west coast and had been the Navy and Marines first choice for the landing sites, was also thoroughly worked over by Navy and Marine air units. Operations were also conducted against Seoul, Haeju, Pyongyang and Kaesong to isolate the Inchon-Seoul area. (Heinl, pp. 77-78; Langley p. 62)

Operations against the Inchon area intensified on 10 September when Wolmi-do was hit by a napalm raid that dropped 95,000 pounds of the firey substance on the island. The aircraft carrier escort group that conducted this raid had to return to Saesko to replenish, but air attacks were continued on 12-13 September by TF-77, the First Carrier Group. (Heinl, p. 78; Langley, p. 62; Montross and Camzona, p. 85)

A Royal Navy Group had entered Flying Fish Channel from the north on 5-6 September and shelled Wolmi-do. Another purpose of this operation was to draw North Korean attention to the

northern approach and tempt them to mine that approach rather than the southern approach which would be used for the assault. The ruse did not work completely. On 10 September ROK patrol boats spotted North Korean boats laying mines in the southern approach (Langley, p. 63)

TF-90.6, Gunnery Support Group, under the command of Rear Admiral John M. Higgins was responsible for planning and conducting the naval bombardment of INCHON. In planning for the operation Admiral Higgins had to trade risk and advantages, as did all INCHON planners. To avoid the risk of collision or grounding in narrow Flying Fish Channel, which could have stopped the whole operation, Admiral Higgins decided to forego the advantages of surprise and the cover of darkness and conduct bombardment operations in the daylight. And instead of avoiding enemy fire, Admiral Higgins hoped to induce the shore batteries of the North Korean 918th Coastal Artillery, reported defending the area, to return fire and expose their positions. (Montross and Canzona, p. 85) Admiral Higgins must have been comforted somewhat, however, by knowing UN forces would have naval and air superiority.

On 13 September five destroyers entered Flying Fish Channel under the air cover of TF-77. They encountered mines in the channel but got through by exploding the mines with 40mm gun fire. At 1248 hours the destroyers began a close range bombardment of Wolmi-do. After about thirty minutes, the shore batteries on Wolmi-do and in Inchon began to return fire. Three of the destroyers were hit, but not seriously. By the time the

fire mission ended the destroyers had fired 1,347, 5-inch rounds into Wolmi-do and parts of Inchon. The only unfortunate casualty of the day was Lieutenant (Junior Grade) David H. Swenson, serving aboard the USN Swenson. Lieutenant Swenson was the nephew of Captain Lyman Swenson for whom the destroyer was named. (Appleman, p. 503; Heinl, pp. 83-84)

The NKPA's 918th Coastal Artillery had proven that it occupied good positions and could deliver effective fire. As a result it was decided in an evening conference between Admirals Struble, Doyle and Higgins to give Wolmi-do "a real working over", as Admiral Struble put it, with destroyers, cruisers and aircraft, (Heinl, p. 85)

On 14 September, the days activites began with a TF-77 carrier strike against Wolmi-do. Immediately after the air strike, TF 90.6 cruisers opened fire. The North Korean costal batteries returned fire. When the cruisers completed their fire mission another air strike was conducted. At the end of the air strike the destroyer force was in position and ready to fire. By this time specific targets had been identified and the destroyers worked against these targets as well as delivering general neutralizing fire. In seventy-five minutes the destroyers delivered 1,732 rounds of five inch ordnance on Wolmi- do. As the destroyers retired they were not engaged by the 918th's batteries, or more appropriately, former batteries. (Appleman, p. 503; Heinl. pp. 85-86; Langley, pp. 65-66)

THE LANDING

D-day for INCHON was 15 September 1950, with H-hour for GREEN Beach, the initial assault on Wolmi-do, at 0630 hours. H-hour for RED and BLUE Beaches was 1730 hours. (Map IV-A) The completed landing Force plan looked as follows: (Map IV-f)

1. BLT-3 of RCT-5 land on GREEN Beach at L-hour D-day and seize Wolmi-do
2. RCT-5 land at RED Beach at H-hour, seize objective O-A
3. RCT-1 land on BLUE Beach with two battalions and seize objective O-1
4. 11th Marines, with Army 96 FA battalion, land 1st and 2d battalions on GREEN Beach, H-hour. Occupy positions on Wolmi-do and support seizure of beach-head. Priority of fires to RCT-1.
5. ROK Marines, initially division reserve, land over RED Beach on order occupy Inchon in coordination with RCT-5 (Montross and Canzona, p. 64)

This plan had the ultimate advantage of air and naval fire superiority even over a well dug-in enemy force. Also, the lessons learned during World War II about fire support of amphibious operations were not forgotten and were brought to bear at INCHON. From L-45 to L-2 navy crusiers and destroyers placed 2,845 shells on Inchon targets. From L-15 to L-2, three Navy LSMRs (rocket ships) placed 1000 five inch rockets on Wolmi-do Island. At L-2, aircraft attacked, laying a curtain of fire in front of the advancing Marines. Once Wolmi-do was secured, supporting fire from ships would shift to other assigned targets in Inchon and fire a total of 2,875 rounds. Again at H-25, the rocket launcher ships put 6,000 rockets onto RED and BLUE Beaches and the aircraft would do the same thing as

they did at GREEN Beach. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 69-70; Headquarters, X Corps, p. 9) Obviously the Marines enjoyed immense fire support from all available sources. Even so, firepower was not without problems. Namely, the resulting smoke and haze obscured assault areas and added to the confusion of the landing; however, no one would have wanted the alternative.

The following is a sequence of events for GREEN Beach.

GREEN Beach
(3 Battalion, 5th Marines)

D-day 0245 hours: Destroyers hem the target area
0454 hours: Aircraft orbit the invasion beach
0520 hours: Flagship signals "land the
Landing Force"
0545 hours: Cruisers open fire
0600 hours: Landing force boards boats
0600 hours: Aircraft conduct final fires
0633 hours: 3/5 Marines land on Wolmi-do
(LTC Taplett, CDR)
0659 hours: 3d Battalion finds relatively light
resistance due to horrendous
shelling
0730 hours: Half of Wolmi-do is secured
0800 hours: Radio Hill secured as well
as all of the island except the
southern end
1045 hours: End of causeway occupied
1115 hours: Main fighting on GREEN Beach ends
1215 hours: GREEN Beach fully secured

The supporting fires made the assault at GREEN Beach no contest in comparison with many of the Marine experiences in World War II. The enemy was stunned.

The weather had cooperated with good visibility; however, one event did occur that could have resulted in a disaster had the enemy not been pinned down. Local fishermen's boats congested the beach and had not been cleared. Consequently the Marines were concentrating their landings in a gap said to be no

more than fifty yards wide. Had the enemy emplaced mines along the beaches the landings might have had a different ending. (Langley, p. 70)

What resistance that was encountered on Wolmi-do was taken care of piecemeal using grenades, flamethrowers, and best of all, tanks (T-26s). In fact, 10 tracked vehicles landed with the 3rd Bn: six M-26 tanks, one flamethrower tank, two dozer tanks, and one retriever. Some die-hard enemy were buried alive in bunkers by bulldozers. There was some question as to the legality, but it was not pursued. Enemy tanks did make an appearance but were destroyed by the M-26s. (Langley, p. 71)

Later in the morning, elements of the 3d BLT began to move on SoWolmi-do, the small island connected to Wolmi-do by a causeway. Some NKPA soldiers attempted to escape from Wolmi-do by the causeway but were bombed. Those that tried to swim to Inchon were strafed in the water. By 1100 hours the Marines were cleaning up the light resistance on SoWolmi-do.

(Headquarters, X Corps, p. 9)

In action on Wolmi-do the Marines lost seventeen wounded. The NKPA suffered much worse losing 108 killed and 136 prisoners. The action with the bulldozers entombed perhaps another 150 NKPA soldiers. The significant accomplishment, however, was securing Wolmi-do, which was critical to containing the operation. (Langley, pp. 73-74)

Because the tides had dictated that the landing be conducted in two increments, the assaults on Inchon proper did not begin until almost twelve hours after Wolmi-do. There would be no

element of surprise at RED Beach and BLUE Beach.

Because it struck at the heart of Inchon and its port facilities, RED Beach was the most critical beach. The significant actions at RED Beach are as follows:

RED Beach
(5 Regimental Combat Team (-))

D-day 1200 hours: Rear Admiral Higgen's Support Group (4 cruisers and 6 destroyers) begins final shelling. Carrier aircraft seal off the invasion area by disrupting enemy movement within 25 miles of INCHON (deep battle?)

1430 hours: Directed shelling continues from two cruisers

1530 hours: Aircraft strike targets. Twelve aircraft kept on station continuously. Also over GREEN and BLUE Beaches.

1704 hours: LCVP's with lead companies offshore

1724 hours: Signal given to land. Eight (8) LCVPs move to RED Beach. Troops consist of 2 platoons from Company A, 1/5, and all of Company E, 2/5 Marines

1733 hours: 3 of 4 leading LCVPs strike seawall. Assault of Southern RED Beach begins. On Northern RED Beach, the remaining force reach shore - 1 LCVP breaks down. There is heavy resistance and Marines suffer heavy casualties and fighting before breaking out from RED. First Medal of Honor won here by Lt. Baldomers Lopez.

1745 hours: Cemetery Hill taken

1800 hours: 8 LSTs make shore

1830 hours: 5th Marine Commander lands at RED Beach

2300 hours: Recon into Inchon

2359 hours: RED Beach declared clear and Observatory Hill secured (Langley, pp. 153-154)

RCT-5 (-) landed on RED Beach just north of the Wolmi-do causeway. The landing was conducted with two battalions abreast

in columns of companies against moderate resistance.

(Headquarters, X Corps, p. 10) RED Beach was dominated by three terrain features: Cemetery Hill, Observatory Hill, and further away British Consulate Hill (Map A). Inspite of the heavy bombardment, the enemy offered heavy resistance from dug in positions, using these hills to good advantage. Additionally, rain squalls moved in and combined with smoke and dust from the bombardment to significantly reduce visibility. Conversely, it provided some concealment from enemy observation. Additionally, darkness was approaching . Still the close air support continued at times no more than 30 yards in front of the assault troops. Again, the assault forces experienced overwhelming fire superiority which covered the landing and helped keep casualties to a minimum. (Langley, pp. 78-79)

Strong small unit leadership and initiative were apparent throughout the entire landing. An action by 2LT Francis W. Muetzel and one of the squads of his 2d Platoon of Company A, 5th Marines exemplifies this type of leadership. Once ashore, Muetzel got off the seawall and moved toward his objective which was the Asahi Brewery. (Map IV-D) The remainder of his platoon was still in a LCVP that had broken down. He took the objective unopposed. The 3rd platoon, Company A, had lost their platoon leader. Their objective was Cemetery Hill which still had not been taken. The other waves of Marines landings were taking heavy fire from the hill. The Company Commander, Captain Stevens, ordered Muetzel to leave the brewery and come back to the beach to help. On the way back, still with one squad,

Muetzel, decided to assault Cemetery Hill from the rear. He assaulted with his squad capturing a dozen enemy on the way up the hill. Once over the crest they captured the hill and the remainder of the 226th NKPA Regiment's Mortar Company. The NKPA gave up without any more fight. The squad had hardly fired a round and without even one casualty took Cemetery Hill in minutes, thereby securing RED Beach. Company A suffered eight killed and twenty-eight wounded but had secured the key Cemetery Hill. (Montross and Canzona. pp. 105-106)

Observatory Hill and British Consulate Hill remained to be taken to assure unobstructed movement across the causeway from Wolmi-do island. But as darkness approached, so did confusion and chaos, those two "comrades" that fight both sides of every war, in every battle.

At 1800 hours eight LSTs moved toward RED Beach ostensibly to draw fire and thus locate enemy positions. The eight vessels were supposed to distract the enemy while other craft were off-loading elsewhere. They succeeded in drawing fire, but they also fired back with 40mm guns. Imagine a scene of growing darkness, smoke and Marines ashore between the NKPA and the eight LSTs with their 40mm guns blazing away. LT Muetzel's platoon had taken Cemetery Hill without casualties but was now hit by friendly fire. One marine was killed and twenty-three were wounded. LT Muetzel's platoon moved off toward Observatory Hill to escape the LST fire. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 110-111)

Meanwhile Company C had left behind their Commander who was stranded on an LCVP that had dropped from the assault formation

to tow another stalled craft. Consequently, LT Paul Pederson was eventually dropped off at the wrong place on RED Beach. However, junior leadership again performed in that two of Pederson's platoons struck out and assaulted Observatory Hill as planned. Their attack was successful, but they could not announce it since the required signal flare was a dud. Apparently there were no backup. Therefore, two platoons of Company C occupied their objective unknown to LTC George Newton, Commander 1st Battalion, 5th Division. LTC Newton thereby ordered Company B to take Observatory Hill in darkness. Company B conducted the attack and joined Company C which was already there. Company E had taken British Consulate Hill and suffered no casualties. (Map IV-D) Again, the desire was not to conduct operations at night but the tides would not allow otherwise. Apparently the enemy was just as confused by events and could not take advantage of the darkness or temporary chaos experienced by the 2d Battalion. This was partly due to the Marine's continuous pressure on the enemy. The X Corps War Diary reports that RCT-5 halted at about 2000 hours to reorganize and consolidate their position, but was pushing out combat patrols to OA line by 2330 hours. The patrols reached OA line without opposition and outposted it for the night. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 10) So by 2400 hours a line was secured that encompassed all three hills.

BLUE Beach was being assaulted simultaneously with RED Beach. The order of events are as follows: (Langley, pp. 155-156)

BLUE Beach
(RCT-1)

D-day 1400 hours: First LCVPs move early to command boats due to heavy swells and speed of channel current. Current would increase travel time to beach.
1430 hours: Two British Cruisers shell BLUE Beach, one concentrates on Tok Am Promontory
1645 hours: 18 LVT (A)'s carrying first wave starts for shore
1730 hours: First three waves land
1800 hours: All battalions and companies ashore
Other beaches are discovered (BLUE 2 and YELLOW)
2000 hours: Company D captures road junction
2200 hours: Company F controls Hill 117
D + 1 0130 hours: Colonel Puller reports that BLUE Beach is secure
D + 2 All 1st Marine Division armor ashore via BLUE Beach.

BLUE Beach was approximately four miles south of RED Beach. It was divided into three separate beaches. Each beach had about 500 yards of maneuver space, so BLUE Beach was larger than RED Beach. BLUE Beach, however, had other problems. At BLUE Beach One and Two, assault forces would be required to scale fourteen to sixteen foot seawalls with ladders. BLUE Beach was dominated by Hill 117 to the northeast, which also dominated the main approach from Seoul to Inchon.

RCT-1 was commanded by Colonel Lewis "Chesty" Puller, one of the most highly decorated Marines of WW II and a future Commandant of the Marine Corps. The mission of RCT-1 was to secure the area south of Inchon and seize a beachhead which covered the main approach to Inchon and from which the regiment could attack directly toward Yongdungpo. To do this, the

regiment planned to seize four immediate objectives. The 2d Battalion, landing at BLUE One, would seize a critical road junction leading into Inchon from the east and Hill 117. The 3d Battalion, landing at BLUE Two, would seize Hills 94 and 223. The 1st Battalion was in reserve and was supposed to follow 3d Battalion over BLUE Two. (Map IV-E) (Heinl, pp. 110-113)

As it turned out, the main task for most of RCT-1 was just getting ashore. The landing became confused and prolonged for two reasons. One reason was the lack of sufficient Navy guide craft to guide all assault waves. Another reason was visibility. BLUE Beach was downwind from Inchon which was burning from constant bombardment. The smoke and rain squalls mixed to form an impenetrable, mustard-colored haze which blanketed the boat lanes and the beach. (Heinl, pp. 111-112)

The initial three assault waves of the two lead battalions were guided through the haze to their beaches with little problem. The following waves became slowed and disoriented because of the poor visibility, the lack of guides, and also the lack of radios and compasses. Fortunately, sufficient forces and leaders had landed in the first three waves to accomplish the mission. (Heinl, p. 113; Montross and Canzona, pp. 120-121)

Lieutenant Colonel Sutter, Commander, 2d Battalion, on BLUE One had most of Companies D and F ashore, but none of Company E, the battalion's reserve. With twilight approaching, LTC Sutter ordered Companies D and F to move out to secure the battalion's objectives. The companies encountered light resistance and by 2200 hours Company D had occupied the critical road junction and

Company F had secured Hill 117. (Heinl, pp. 114-115)

On BLUE Two, LTC Ridge's 3d Battalion was in the same situation. The battalion's Companies G and I were mostly ashore, but the reserve, Company H was not. Companies G and I moved out none the less. Company G secured the corridor leading into the battalion area and Company I secured Hill 223. When Company H made it ashore, it was ordered to secure Hill 94. The company's lead platoon encountered a NKPA company on the hill, but the enemy abandoned its prepared positions without a fight. (Heinl, pp. 114-115)

As important as the tactical operation was, the operation to establish combat support and logistical support ashore was just as important.

The plan called for two battalions of the 11th Marines, the 1st Marine Division's Division Artillery, to land on Wolmi-do and support the attack on RED and BLUE Beaches. The landing craft carrying the 105mm howitzers proved under-powered for the swift current and heavy loads. The battalions finally made it ashore, however, and were established and ready to mass fires by 2150 hours. (Heinl, p. 117)

Perhaps the most daring operation of the day was the logistical operation. Because three hours was insufficient time to conduct the assault and then bring in supply LST's to be off loaded, the decision was made to bring in eight LST's loaded with supplies, beach them, and unload them overnight. These eight LST's were in the early assault waves on RED Beach and were beached when the evening tide receded. Beachhead crews, working all night

under spot light which made them targets for enemy machine guns and mortars, were successful in unloading the craft so they would be ready to depart on the morning tide and be replaced by more supply ships. (Walker, pp. 36-37) Undoubtedly a great deal of the success of this particular operation can be attributed to naval and air superiority

SECURING THE BEACHHEAD LINE

The aircraft of TF-77 were in the air early the 17th of September looking for enemy targets and conducting reconnaissance. They found six NKPA T-34 tanks moving toward BLUE Beach. The first sortie of fighters destroyed three of the tanks and the second sortie destroyed two more and strafed a large number of infantry who had appeared to support the tanks. The NKPA attack dissolved. (Heinl, pp. 122-123; Langley, p. 99)

The first priority for the 1st and 5th Marines was to effect a link-up and seal the Inchon area. This was accomplished when elements of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines and 2d Battalion, 1st Marines meet on Hill 117. (Map IV-F) (Heinl, p. 124)

The 5th Marines continued to push east toward Ascom City, which had been a US Army depot. Ascom City was the pivot point in consolidating the beachhead line, which ran through the city. At Ascom, the 5th Marines would be in a position to continue their attack to seize Kimpo Airfield, cross the Han River, and attack Seoul. (Appelman, p. 509)

In the North, the 5th Marines seized a series of hills to the west of Ascom City which dominated the town and the main Seoul-Inchon road just to the south of the town. In the south the 1st Marines were pushing forward. The 3d Battalion conducted a sweep off of Hill 223 south through the Munhang Peninsula and captured several enemy and numerous 120mm mortars. Simultaneously, the 2d Battalion and 1st Battalion moved east toward the beachhead line. (Montross and Canzona, pp. 136-138)

When the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines occupied the high ground south of Ascom City the beachhead line was essentially secured. Although neither regiment sat on the line, they occupied the key terrain which dominated the line and they controlled the high speed avenue of approach into Inchon. (Langley, pp. 101-102)

As the 1st Marines pushed east they continually expanded their right (southern) flank. To strengthen this vulnerable flank, the 1st Marine Division Reconnaissance Company landed and moved to the 1st Marine's flank and assumed a flank guard mission. (Montross and Canzona, p. 14)

A contingent of ROK Marines was landed during the day to mop-up the enemy in Inchon and eliminate a rear area threat. The ROK Marines did their job with such zeal that neither friend or foe was safe. (Appleman, p. 508)

It was decided not to displace the division command post (CP) ashore on D-day so that every available minute could be used to debark troops and supplies. On the morning of the 16th, after waiting for congestion on the beach to clear, BG Edward Gray, the Assistant Division Commander (ADC), took a party ashore and

established the Division CP. When MG Smith came ashore at 1730 hours and arrived at the CP, he sent ADM Doyle a message stating that he had assumed responsibility for the conduct of the operation ashore. (Montross and Canzona, p. 142)

THE SEIZURE OF KIMPO AIRFIELD

The night of 16 September was relatively quiet for the Marines, but the morning of the 17th brought the first significant action since the landing. The NKPA's 2d Battalion, 1st Regiment, Seoul Defense Division, with a platoon of six tanks, advanced west toward Inchon on the main Seoul Inchon road. Unknowingly, the North Koreans were advancing into the area which was well covered by the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines and 2d Battalion, 1st Marines from their positions on the high ground west of Ascom City. The Marines held fire until the North Koreans were well within range and then engaged them with 75mm recoilless rifles, 3.5 inch bazookas, and the 90mm guns of the tanks of 1st Platoon, Company A, Tank Battalion. The fight was short and violent. All six NKPA tanks were destroyed and at least 200 of the supporting infantry were slain. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 11; Langley, pp. 101-102)

On the evening of 16 September MG Smith issued Operation Order 5-50. It directed the 1st and 5th Marines to attack on 17 September to secure X Corps Phanse Line CC. The main objective within the 5th Marine's area was Kimpo Airfield. (Map IV-G) The 5th Marines plan for seizing Kimpo called for the 2d

Battalion to seize two small knolls south of the airfield (Objective ABLE and BAKER); for the 3rd Battalion, 1st Korean Marines to attack to the north of Ascom City to seize a hill complex designated Objectives ONE, TWO, and THREE; for the 1st Battalion to follow the 2d Battalion, pass it at Objective BAKER and seize a hill, which was designated Objective EASY, to the southeast of Kimpo. Seizure of the objectives would isolate the airfield, which had the Han River to its east. Kimpo Airfield was designated Objective CHARLIE and was to be taken by the 2d Battalion. (Langley, p. 106); Montross and Canzona, pp. 153)

The operation went well. As a matter of fact the reserve, 1st Battalion saw more action than anyone during their passage of Ascom City. Several groups of North Koreans had remained behind in the city and conducted bothersome but ineffective attacks on the 1st Battalion.

Kimpo Airfield was defended by 400-500 North Koreans, but their defense against the 2d Battalion, supported with tanks, was ineffectual. By 1800 hours the 2d Battalion occupied the southern portion of the airfield where they established a defensive perimeter for the night. The North Koreans conducted several counterattacks during the early morning hours of 18 September. The counterattacks were conducted by remnants of the North Korean 1st Air Division, the 107th Regiment, the 226th Regiment, and the 877th Air Force Unit. While locally fierce at times, all the counterattacks were repulsed. In the morning the 2d Battalion was joined by the 1st Battalion and the area around

Kimpo was cleared by 1000 hours. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 11; Appleman, pp. 510-511; Montross and Canzona, p. 153-157, 160-163)

At 1030 hours Company D, 2d Battalion attacked to seize Regimental Objective DOG, which was Hill 131 that dominated the Han River northeast of the airfield. Company D advanced with the support of naval gunfire and secured the hill by 1145 hours. (Montross and Canzona, p. 163)

This successful phase of the operation was significant for two reasons. The seizure of Kimpo enhanced the capability to use airpower. On the afternoon of 18 September the advance elements of Marine Air Group 33 arrived and the next day C-54 cargo planes from Japan began to bring supplies. On 20 September land based Corsair fighters conducted their first airstrikes from Kimpo. The seizure of Hill 131 put the Marines in a very good position to cross the Han and continue the attack on Seoul. (Appleman, p. 151)

THE ATTACK ON SOSA

On the morning of 17 September the 1st Marines launched an attack that was suppose to carry them to Yongdungpo, across the Han, and into Seoul. The Regiment attacked with the 2d Battalion moving along the main Seoul-Inchon road. The 3rd Battalion, in amtracs and with a tank platoon attached, followed the 2d Battalion. The 1st Battalion was to the south protecting the regiment and division's flank. (Montross and

Canzona, p. 173)

The regiment encountered its first resistance at Hill 208 just south of Ascom City. (Map IV-H) There the 2d Battalion hit part of a regiment from the North Korean 18th Rifle Division. This division had been about to depart Seoul for the battle at Naktong when the landing at Inchon occurred. The division was ordered to recapture Inchon and was moving to do that when its lead elements engaged the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines at Hill 208. (Appleman, p. 513)

The North Koreans offered firm resistance. To maintain the momentum of the attack, the 3rd Battalion, in amtracs and with tanks, passed around the 2d Battalion. It took a sharp tank engagement in the village of Mahang-Ri, which sat astride the road, and heavy artillery support to overcome the resistance. The North Koreans retreated toward Sosa with the Marines in pursuit. The North Koreans again offered stiff resistance at the last piece of high ground to the west of Sosa. The 2d Battalion attacked on the north side of the road and the 3rd Battalion was on the south. The high ground was finally secured after strikes by five Corsair fighters. The North Koreans retreated to Sosa leaving behind 250 killed and wounded. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 11; Heinl, pp. 154-155; Langley, pp. 117-119)

On 18 September at 0645 hours the Marines continued the attack. The 2d Battalion led the way again along the road. The 3rd Battalion, again in amtracs and with tank support, soon passed through to press the attack. The Marines were well

supported by naval gunfire. The HMS Kenya fired 300 six inch rounds on the high ground east of Sosa. Contrary to the previous day the Marines met only light resistance and by late afternoon had consolidated their position on the high ground east of Sosa. (Map IV-I) (Montross and Canzona, pp. 177-178) Although severe difficult fighting lay ahead, the way was made open to take Yongdungpo and cross the Han to Seoul.

THE 7TH DIVISION LANDS

Ships carrying the 7th Division had begun to arrive in Inchon on 16 September and on the 18th the 2d Battalion, 32 Regiment landed. The regiment was attached to the 1st Marine Division until the 7th Division could establish his CP ashore. MG Smith immediately ordered the 2d Battalion to relieve the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines on the division's southern flank so the 1st Battalion could assist its regiment in the attack on Yongdungpo. The 2d Battalion, 32d Regiment was not able to effect this relief until 1200 hours on the 19th. This brought several caustic remarks from the Marines about the competency of the Army, but the real problem had been a lack of coordination between the Army and Marines beginning at the Corps level. (Appleman, p. 511; Headquarters, X Corps, p. 12; Heinl, p. 157)

On 19 September the 7th Division CP established itself ashore and MG Barr took control. The remainder of the 32d Regiment landed and was followed on the 20th by the 31st Regiment. So by the end of the 20th, the bulk of the 7th Division was ashore and

operational in its zone to the south of the 1st Marine Division. The 32d Regiment moved east and seized objectives that would prevent any enemy escape to or reinforcement from the south through Pangchungmori or Angan-Ni. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 14; Heinl, p. 157)

The arrival of the 7th Division was important not only because it covered the 1st Marine Division's open flank, but also allowed the division to redeploy forces in a manner necessary to seize Yongdungpo and cross the Han River. (Heinl, p. 156)

SUSTAINING THE FORCE

While the units were extending the beachhead, support groups were working around the clock to establish logistical operations to sustain the operation.

On 17 September, the 2d Engineer Special Brigade(Army) landed to assume control of port operations at Inchon. Subordinate units included the 1st Combat Service Group(Marine), charged with control of consolidated supply dumps; the 7th Motor Transport Battalion(Marine); and the 1st Shore Party Battalion(Marine, which was responsible for unloading ships. (Walker, p. 37) Note the grouping of three major Marine units under an Army headquarters.

Inchon, as a port, was operational by the end of the day. All supplies were being brought in over GREEN Beach and then trucked across the causeway or at pier two in the harbor.

Despite the heavy fire preparation for the landing, most of Inchon's port facilities were undamaged. This was done intentionally and was the big reason Inchon was operational so early. The Korean port master was located and he was able to provide harbor pilots, which made it much easier for ships to enter the harbor. (Walker, p. 37)

Once port operations began, X Corps found that there were insufficient trucks to clear the port of incoming supplies. To clear the port, X Corps retained control of the 7th Mortar Transport Battalion(Marine), which was suppose to support the 1st Marine Division. Retention of the trucks brought a strong protest from the Marines with little effect. (Walker, p. 38)

Much of the truck shortage was alleviated by using the railroad. Use of the railroad had not been anticipated until D+30, but by the end of 16 September an engine and six cars were operating in the Inchon rail yard. On 19 September, 1,200 Marines were moved to Ascom City by rail. Rapid operation of the rail system was possible because of minimal damage to the rail system, again intentional, and the availability of Korean crews. (Walker, p. 38)

By 23 September the port had handled 24,000 tons of supplies (8,000 tons more than planned), 6,000 vehicles, and 53,000 troops had been unloaded. By 26 September, the railroad had moved 315,000 gallons of fuel, 12,600 tons of ammunition, and 10,000 troops. (Walker, pp. 37-38)

TAKING YONGDUNGPO

The primary purpose of the operations of the 1st Marines on the 19th and 20th of September was to get into position to make the final attack on Yongdungpo. Yongdungpo is an industrial suburb of Seoul and sits at the confluence of the Han and Kalchon Rivers. To seize Yongdungpo from the west, the Kalchon River, which is fordable in many places, must be crossed.

Colonel Puller's intent was to arrange his forces so he could bring to bear the power of all three battalions and his supporting arms. His plan called for the 1st Battalion to occupy Hills 80 and 85, which commanded the northeast avenue of approach into Yongdungpo; for the 3rd Battalion to occupy "Lookout Mountain," which commanded the center approach to the city and from which the battalion could react to the north or south; and for the 2d Battalion to occupy the high ground on the southern end of the city which dominated two highway bridges across the Kalchon River. (Montross and Canzona, p. 216)

Accordingly, on the 19th, the 1st Battalion moved from their position on the southern flank of the regiment to occupy Hills 80 and 85. (Map IV-J) The occupation was suppose to be a simple relief in place of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines who had captured the two hills the previous day in a sharp engagement against 300 North Koreans. But the operation did not go simply. Because the 2d Battalion, 32d Regiment was late relieving the 1st Battalion of their duties on the regiment's flank, the 1st Battalion was very late in beginning its movement to relieve the 5th Marines. Meanwhile the 1st Battalion, 5th

action not taken? These are a few of the questions that remain unanswered from available sources.

After the 1st Battalion took Hills 80 and 85, it and the rest of the regiment spent the day consolidating its positions around Yongdungpo in preparation for the attack on the 21st of September. The North Koreans did not let the regiment have the positions easily. The regiment was subjected to intense direct and indirect fire from Yongdungpo. The Marines returned in kind with heavy artillery fires and numerous airstrikes. The 32d Regiment also got into position that day by capturing Tongdok Mountain to the south of the 1st Marines. The 32d Regiments on the mountain were so far south, however, that they could not support the Marines directly. (Heinl, p. 168; Montross and Canzona, pp. 219-221)

The 1st Marines began their attack on Yongdungpo at 0630 hours on 21 September. (Map IV--L) The 2d Battalion attacked from the south in an attempt to cross the highway bridges and enter the city. The 1st Battalion attacked from its positions on Hills 80 and 85. The 3rd Battalion was initially in reserve on "Lookout Mountain," prepared to react to the north or south. (Heinl, p. 169)

The 2nd Battalion's attack was stopped at the bridges when they encountered the bulk of the North Korean 87th Regiment, or what was left of it at the that time. The battalion was receiving the most effective fire from North Koreans who occupied a piece of high ground to the battalion's south. Unfortunately that piece of high ground was a few yards inside

the 7th Division's zone and the 1st Regiment did not have clearance to direct fire into the 7th Division's zone, although the area was clearly occupied by the North Korean's. A situation quickly developed that again highlighted the coordination problem. The request to fire into the 7th Division's zone had to go to X Corps, over to the 7th Division and back down to the Marines. After several hours, in which the 2d Battalion watched the North Koreans improve their positions, the fire request was denied by Corps because of concerns that the Koreans that the 2d Battalion was observing might be "friendly" Koreans attached to the 32d Regiment. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 15; Heinl, pp. 169-170) Again, one must ask, what were the procedures for coordination. Had the Marine and Army regiments or divisions exchanged liaison teams to coordinate such problems as these? Was the X Corps slow and uninformed response because it had not yet established a CP ashore and taken charge of ground operations?

By midafternoon the 2d Battalion had suffered eighty-five casualties and had not made significant progress past the bridges despite airstrikes that were finally authorized. COL Puller decided it was time to commit his reserve, the 3rd Battalion. The battalion attacked from its position on "Lookout Mountain" and was able to ford the Kalchon, but could make little progress past the river. The day's attack for the two battalions ended with them tied in just to the south of the highway bridge that led directly into Yongdungpo. (Heinl, pp. 171-172; Montross and Canzona, pp. 224-225)

The 1st Battalion had managed to push a company across the Kalchon and was holding a position on the northern tip of the city against the Han River. The most significant event in the 1st Battalion's zone, however, was the action of Company A who managed to combine the fortunes of luck with initiative and determination to have a dramatic effect on the battle. Company A, advancing on the south of 1st Battalion, forded the Kalchon, found a gap in the North Korean defenses and, in the words of the Company Commander, "slithered into town undetected." (Heinl, p. 175) The company proceeded down the main street of Yongdungpo, again almost undetected and established a defensive position on the east side of town overlooking the Han River and the Seoul Airfield. Unfortunately Company A's success was not known to its battalion or regiment. Had the regiment known about the gap in the North Korean defenses, the reserves could have attacked there, reinforcing success, rather than continue to batter away at the highway bridge. (Heinl, p. 177)

Once the North Koreans discovered Company A, they made a determined effort to eliminate the company and made several tank supported attacks against it that night. Company A held. It may never be known for sure, but Company A's determined defense must have played a part in the North Korean's decision to abandon Yongdungpo. Sometime during the night what remained of the NKPA's 87th Regiment withdrew across the Han to Seoul. When the 1st and 3rd Battalions launched their attack the next morning they were met with only light resistance and quickly entered Yongdungpo. Company A's patrols found five destroyed

T-34 tanks and 275 dead NKPA soldiers outside their perimeter. (Headquarters, X Corps, pp. 14-15; Heinl, pp. 174-179) Although there was mopping-up to be done, Yongdungpo was essentially secure and the 1st Marines were in position to attack Seoul.

CROSSING THE HAN RIVER

The first attempt to cross the Han came on 19 September. At 2040 hours a group of fourteen swimmers from the Reconnaissance Company swam the river. Finding the far side clear, the swimmers gave the signal for the rest of the company, mounted in amtracs, to cross. When the company was half way across, it received intense automatic weapons and mortar fire from North Koreans who had been concealed on Hill 125. The company was forced to return to the friendly side. One good result of the attempt was the determination that the crossing site was unsuitable for LVT's. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 13)

In the morning the 5th Marines crossed the Han at 0545 at a crossing site three miles north of Kimpo. (Map IV-M) The crossing was heavily supported with airstrikes on Hill 125, which overlooked the crossing site, and the fires of the battalion weapons companies. The regiment crossed in LVTs in a column of battalions. The 3rd Battalion crossed first followed by the 2d Battalion. Once across, the 3rd Battalion attacked Hill 125. They encountered vigorous resistance, but took the hill with the help of more airstrikes. The crossing site was now essentially secure. The 3rd Battalion pushed to the west

and cut the main rail line from Seoul to Kaesong. By that evening the regiment was across the Han in force, a battalion of ROK Marines had crossed, and the engineers were constructing a pontoon bridge. (Appleman, pp. 515-516)

On the morning of 21 September, the Marines repelled several North Korean counterattacks and then the 3rd Battalion attack south along the railroad tracks. (Map IV-N) The captured Hill 104, a critical rail junction just north of Seoul, and then turned east to take Hill 296. By nightfall the regiment held a key series of hills running generally north-south along the west side of Seoul. This series of hills was anchored into the Han River at the village of Sogang. In this position the regiment was only three to four miles from the center of Seoul, but they would have to engage in four days of bloody fighting to advance any further. (Appleman, p. 516)

THE CAPTURE OF SUWON

On 21 September, the 1st Battalion, 32d Regiment captured the transportation center of Angang-ni, cutting southward escape routes from Yongdungpo and Seoul. From Angang-ni, the 7th Division's Reconnaissance Company pushed rapidly south and entered Suwon at 1830 hours. Their entrance caught the enemy completely by surprise and only light resistance was offered. A battalion task force from the 32d Regiment was not too far behind. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 16)

The next morning the Suwon airstrip was captured by the

battalion task force. That task force was quickly relieved by a battalion from the 31st Regiment so the 32d Regiment could continue their attack to the east. (Headquarters, X Corps, p. 16)

TENTH CORPS COMES ASHORE

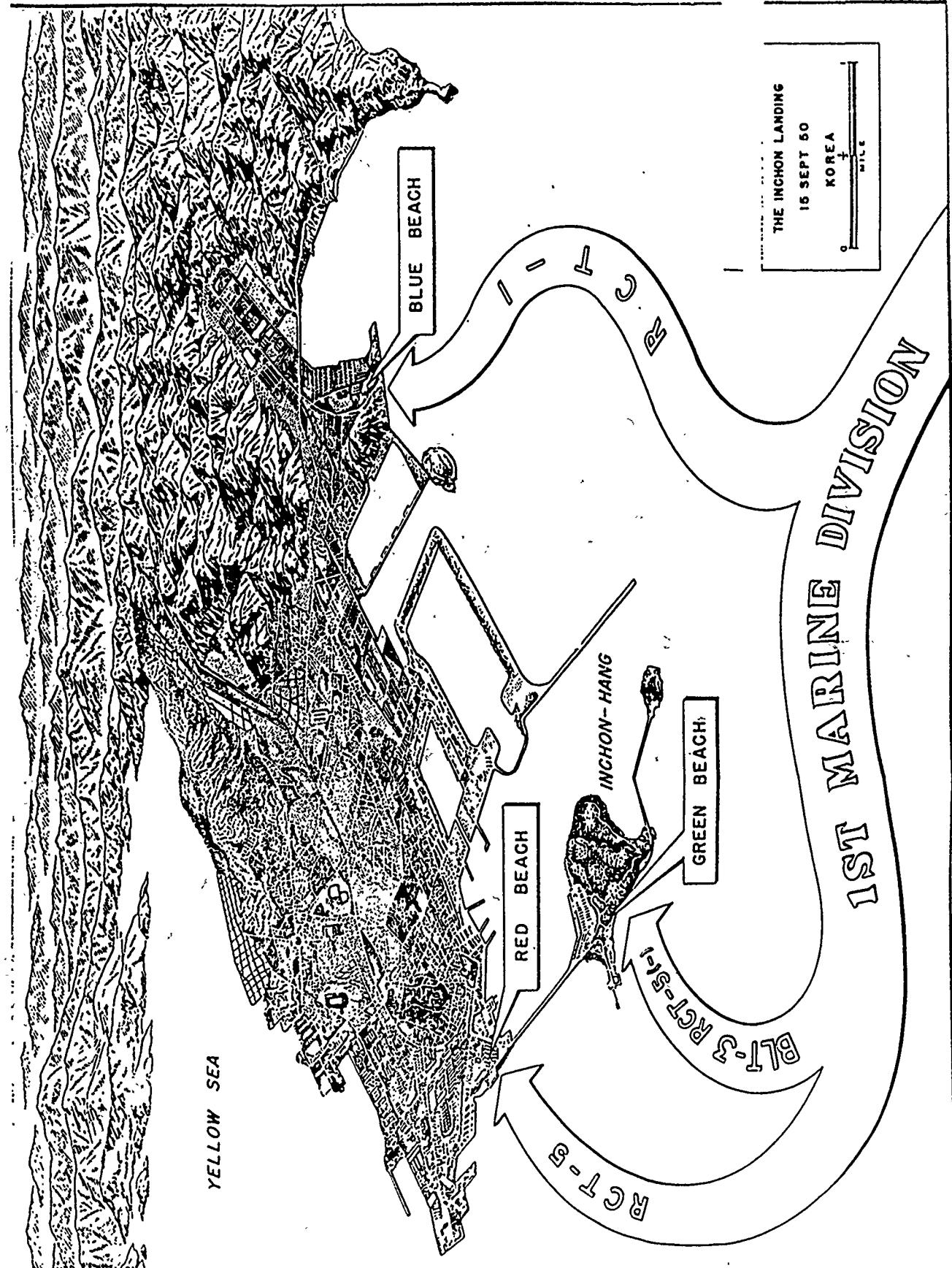
The amphibious aspects of INCHON were rapidly disappearing by 21 September. The ground forces had outrun naval gunfire, except for the sixteen inch guns of the USN Missouri, and permanent logistic bases were being established ashore. Because of this, and MacArthur's insistence that Seoul be captured by 25 September, MG Almond finally decided it was time to establish X Corps ashore. (Heinl, p. 188)

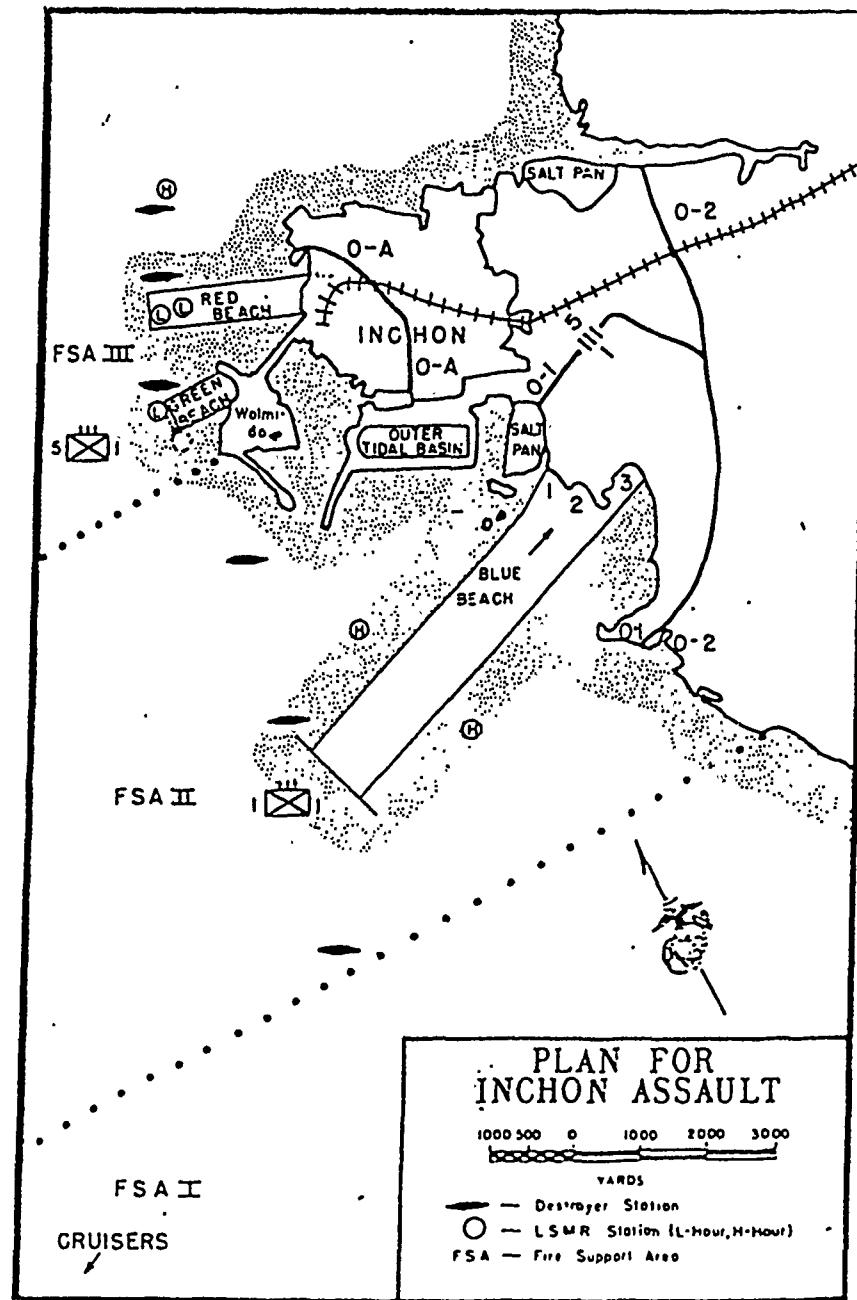
Up to this date, the role of X Corps Headquarters in the operation had been minimal, perhaps because of the staff's lack of amphibious knowledge and lack of experience in working together as a combat unit. Under normal circumstances the ground commander, MG Almond, and the senior Navy commander, ADM Struble, would share the flagship and its communications facilities to insure the close coordination of naval, ground, and air operations. This was not done at INCHON. Although MG Almond was often aboard ADM Struble's flagship, the majority of X Corp's staff was on the transport Buckner, (Heinl, p. 188) One would suspect that this situation contributed to the coordination problems, particularly between the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Division, that existed. Perhaps if X Corps

had assumed command of the ground operation sooner some of these coordination problems could have been avoided.

Regardless of what had been, now was the time for X Corps to assume command. So, with a complete honor guard ceremony, the X Corps assumed command late the afternoon of 21 September. The chain of command now officially ran from GEN MacArthur to X Corps. At 1700 hours ADM Struble dissolved CJTF-7 and assumed the role of Naval Support Force for a ground campaign. (Heinl, p. 189)

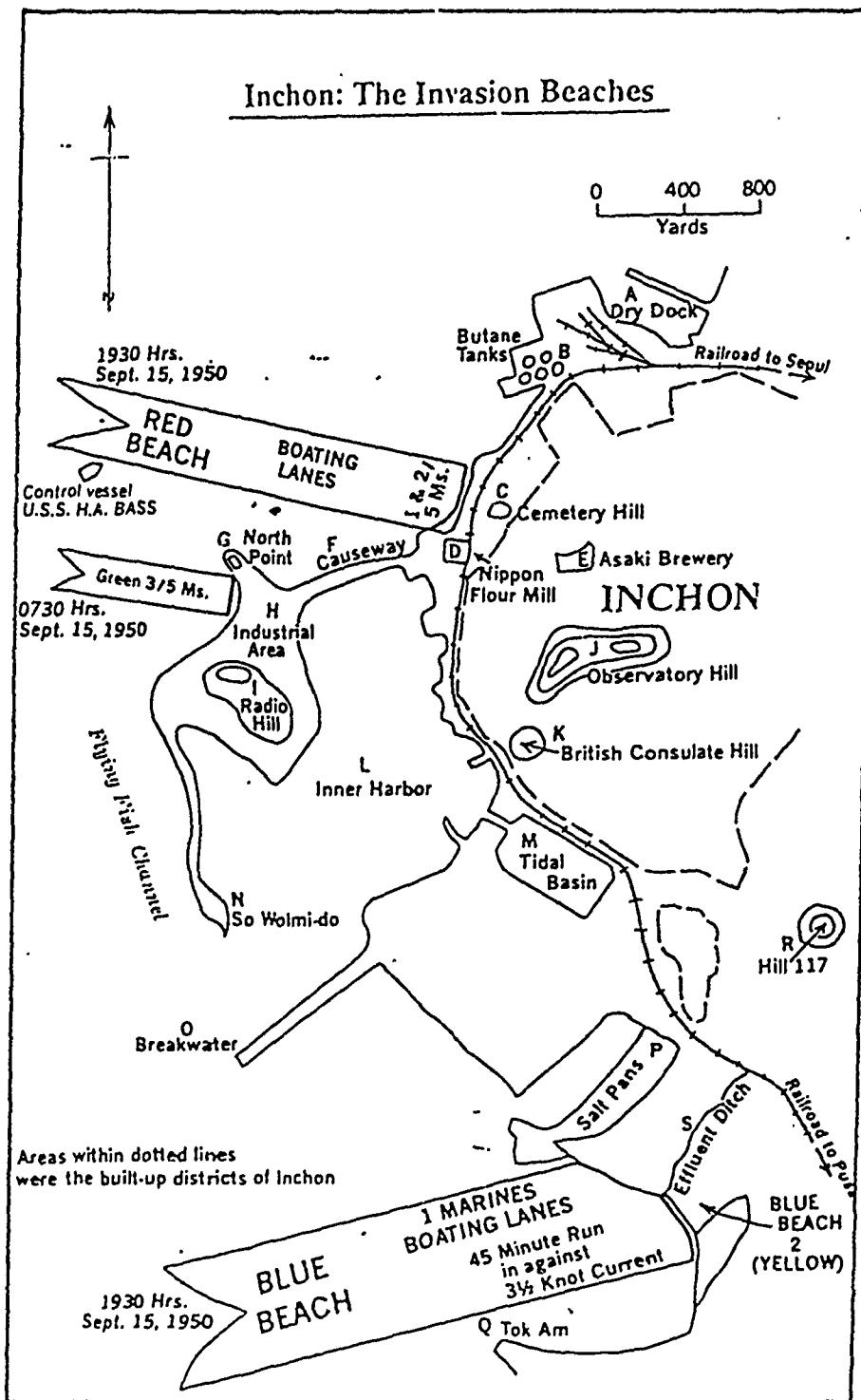
Within twenty-four hours after assuming command, MG Almond found the situation as follows: the Han River had been crossed and the 5th Marines were in firm control on the east side; the 7th Marines had arrived and were to the east of the 5th Marines and prepared to cut off any retreating enemy; Yongdungpo had been captured by the 1st Marines and they were in a position to cross the Han River; and to the south the 7th Division was consolidating its position to prevent any enemy from escaping and any enemy reinforcement. Tenth Corps was now poised for the final attack on Seoul.





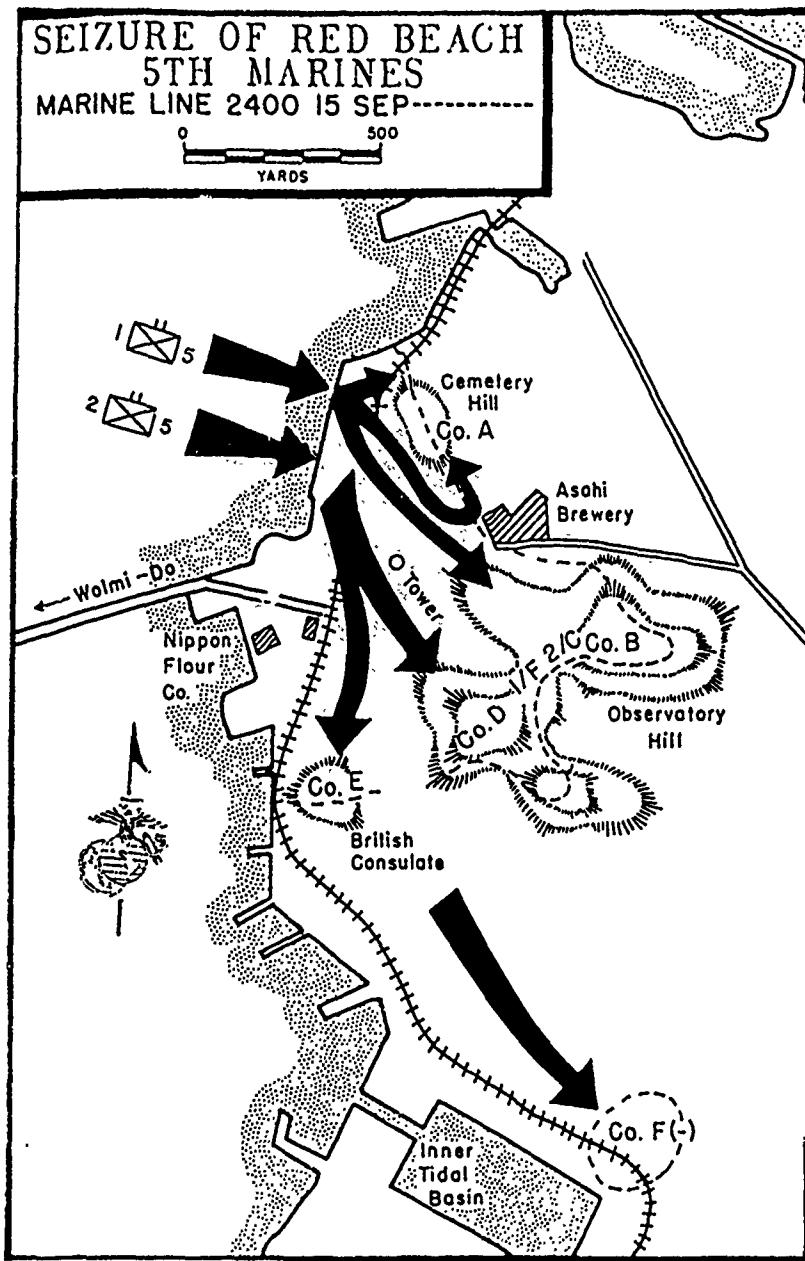
MAP IV - B

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 99)

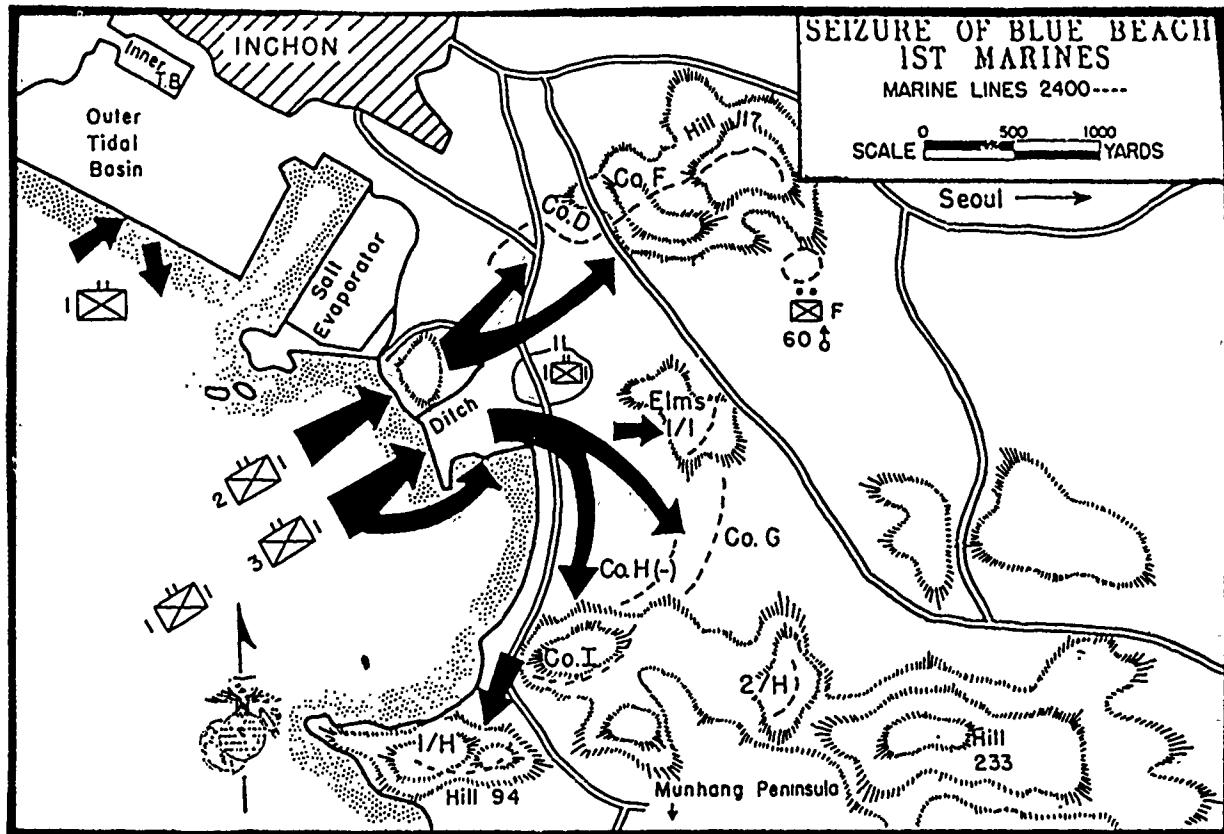


MAP III - C

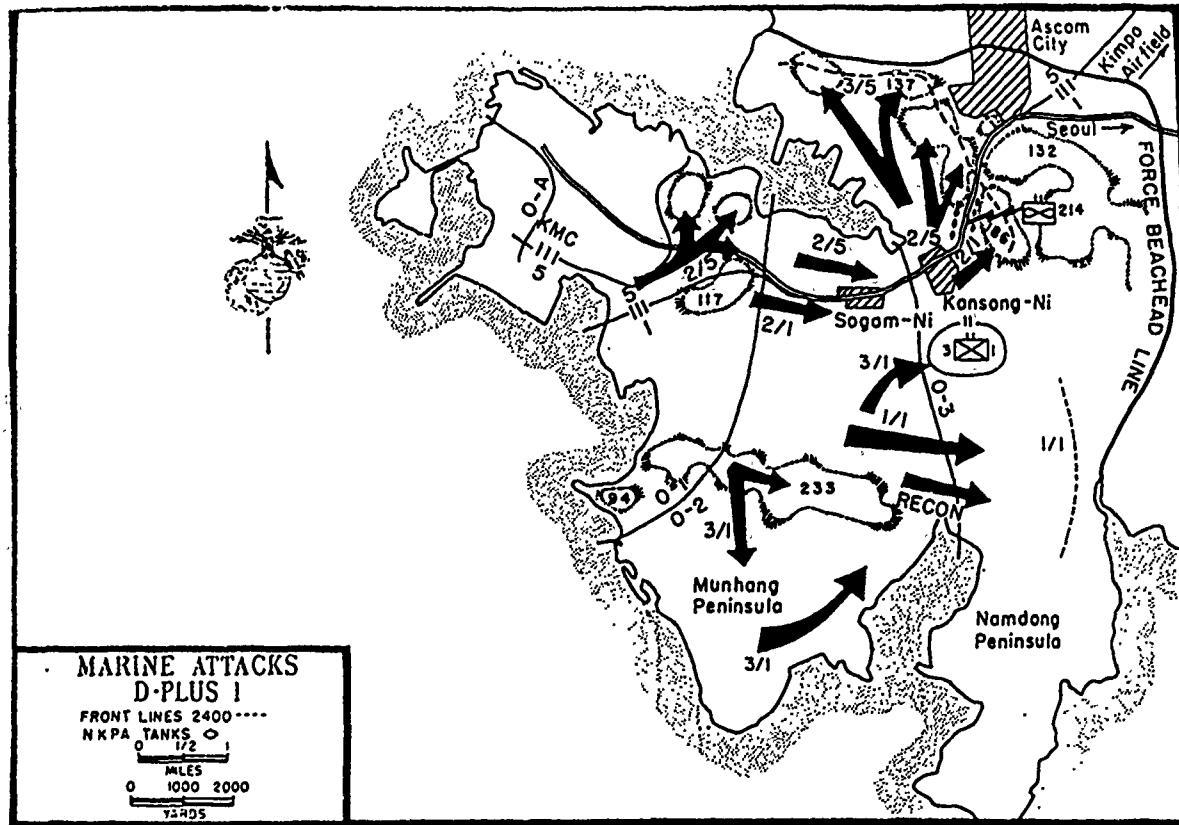
(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 44)



MAP IV - D



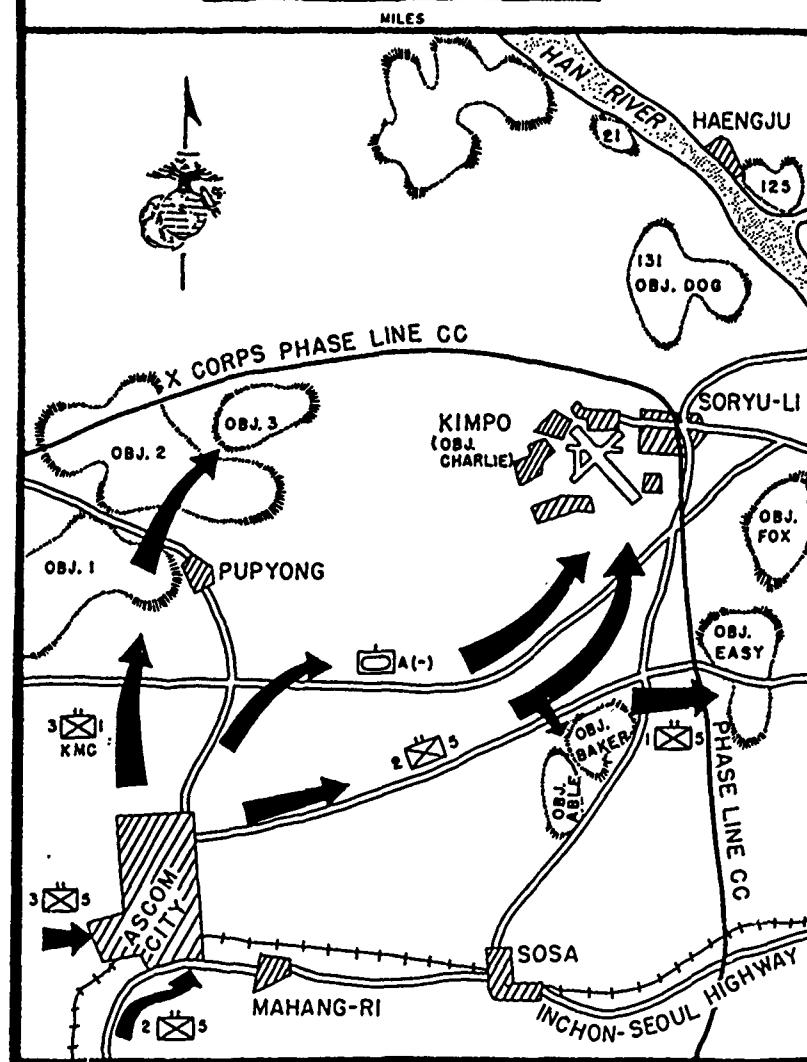
MAP IV - E



MAP IV-F

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 137)

THE DRIVE TO KIMPO
5TH MARINES
17 SEPTEMBER



MAP IV-G

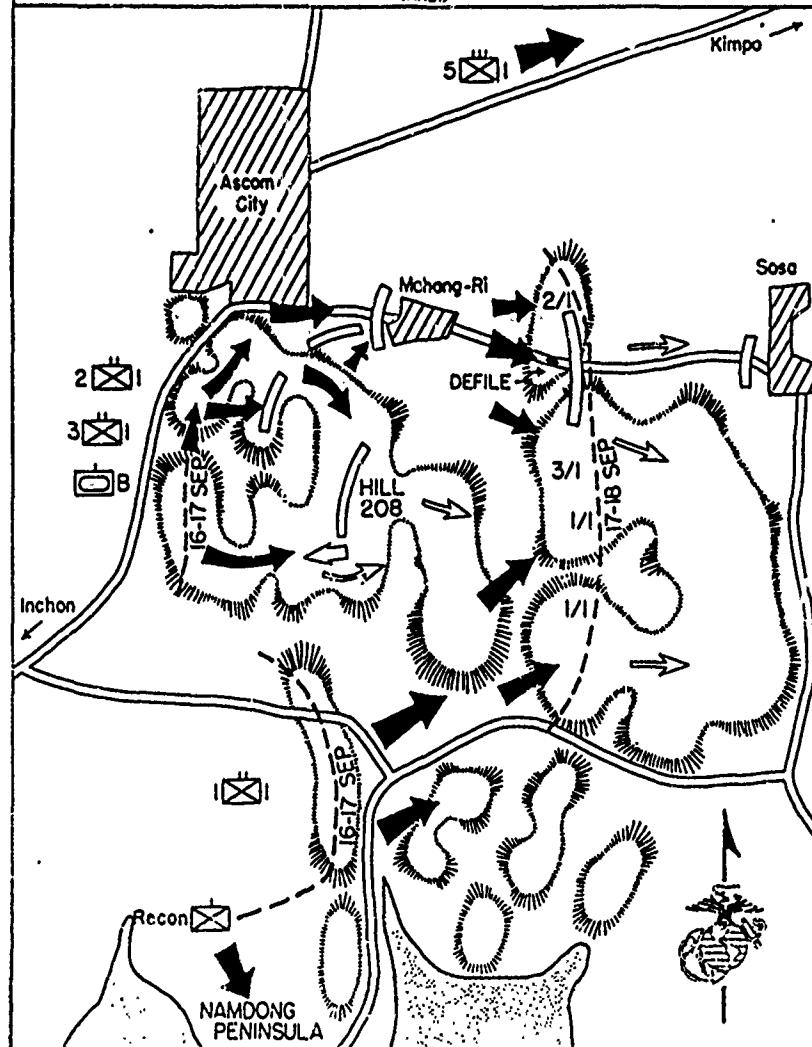
(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 155)

ADVANCE BY 1st MARINES - 17 SEP

MARINE
ATTACKS →
FRONT LINES - - -

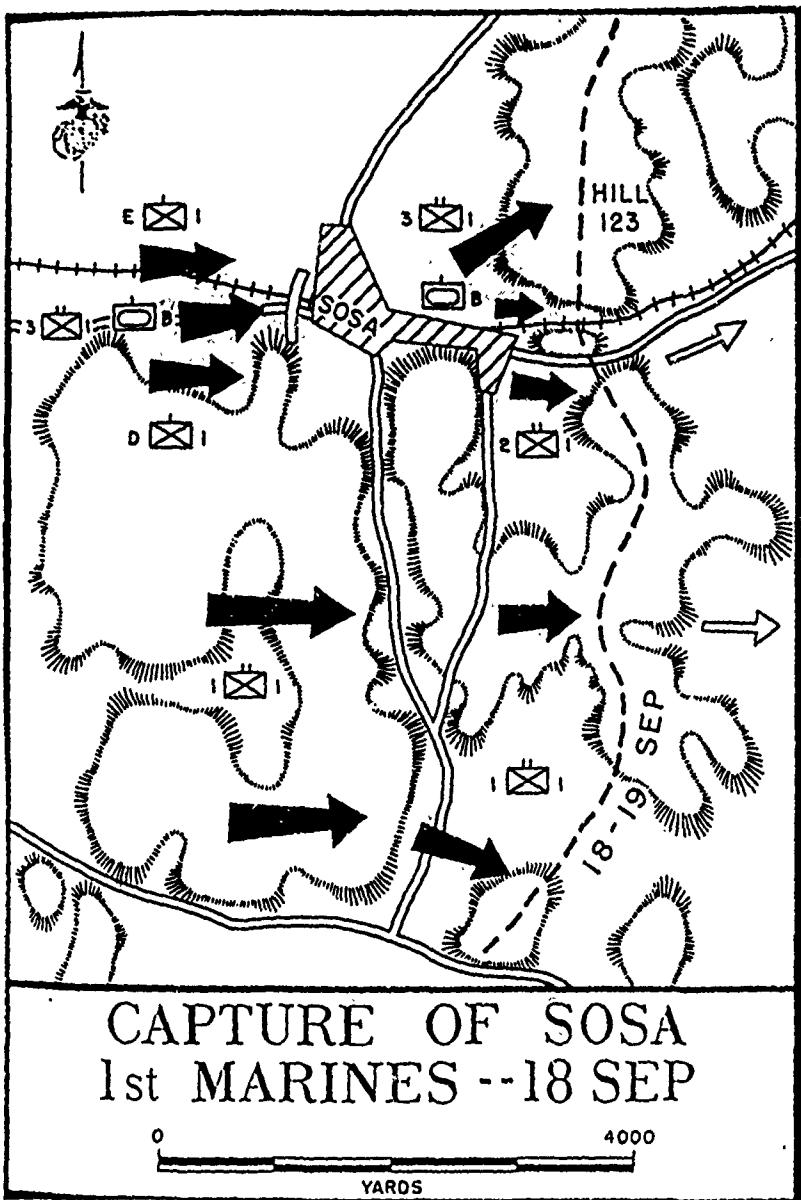
NKPA
POSITIONS
FLIGHT →

0 5000
YARDS



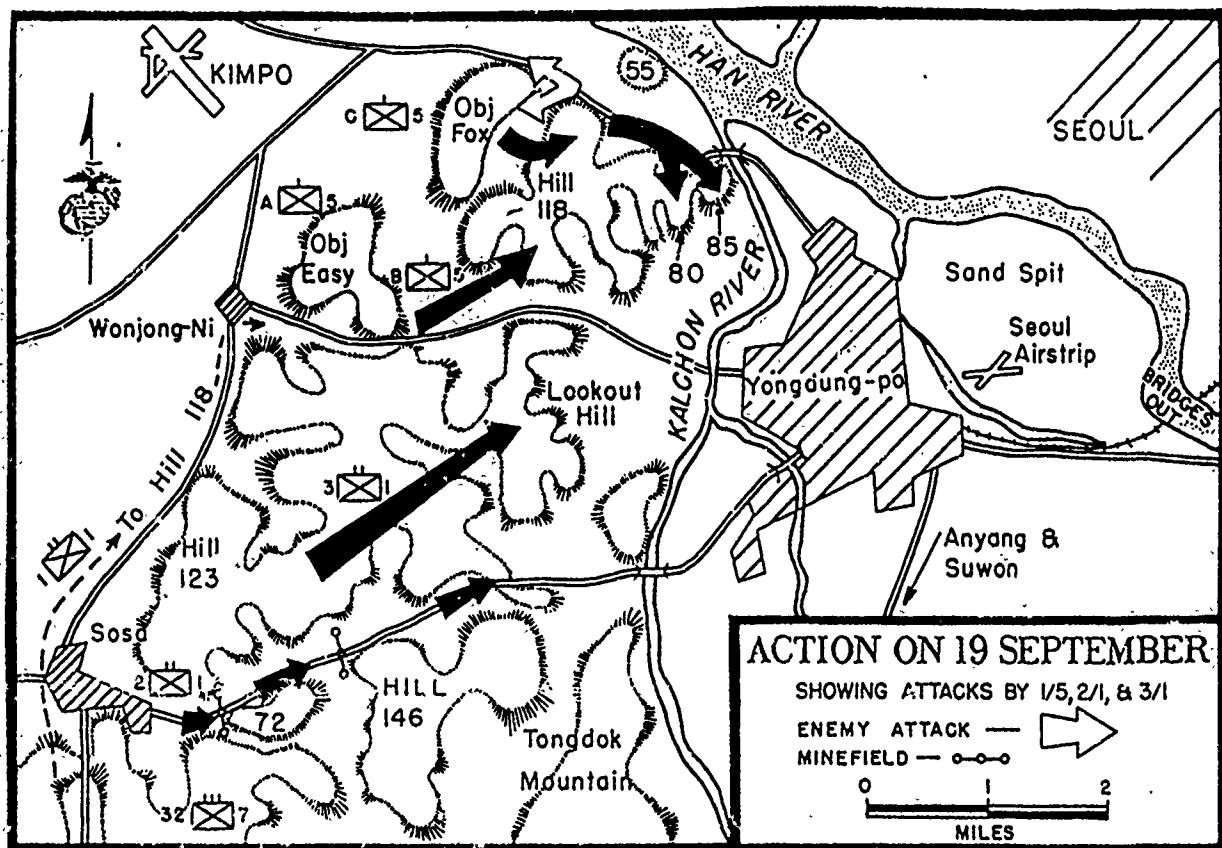
MAP IV - H

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, I. 174)

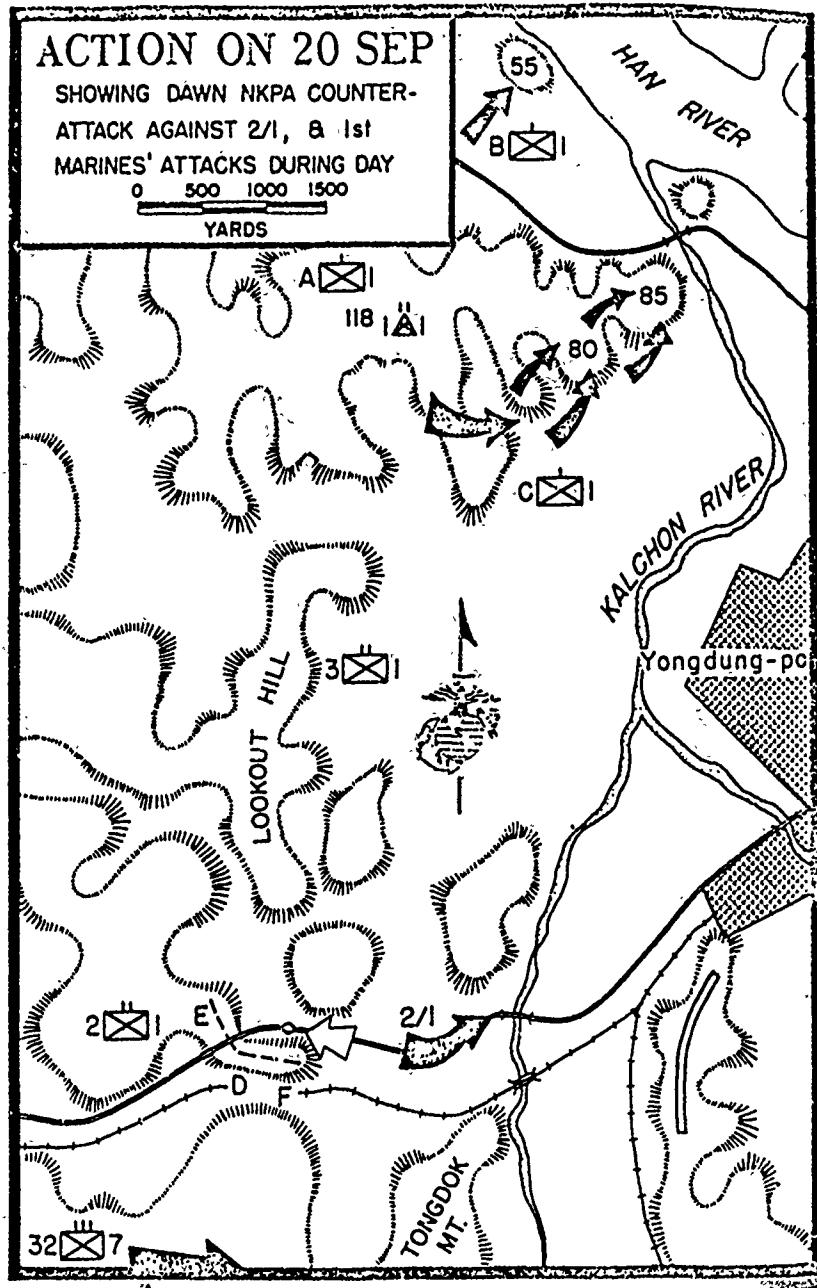


MAP IV- I

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 179)

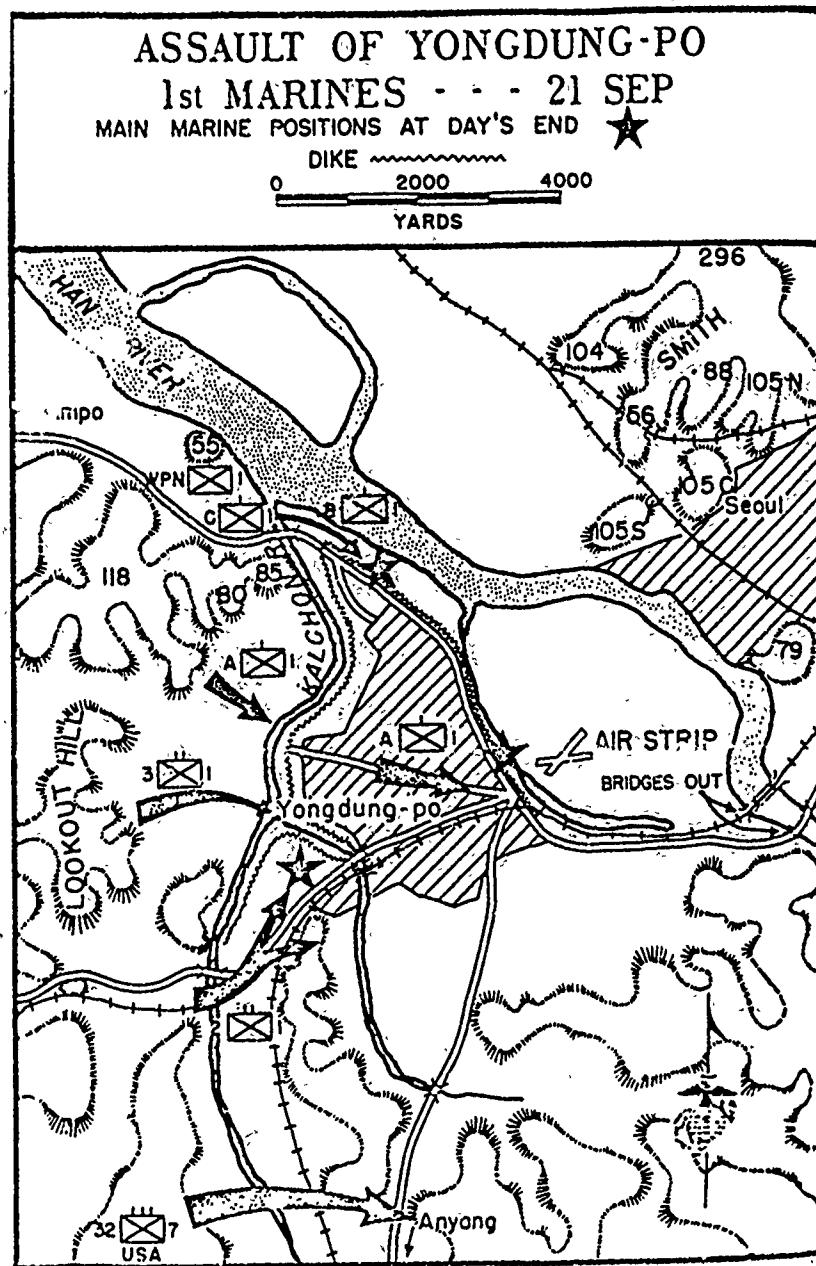


MAP IV - I



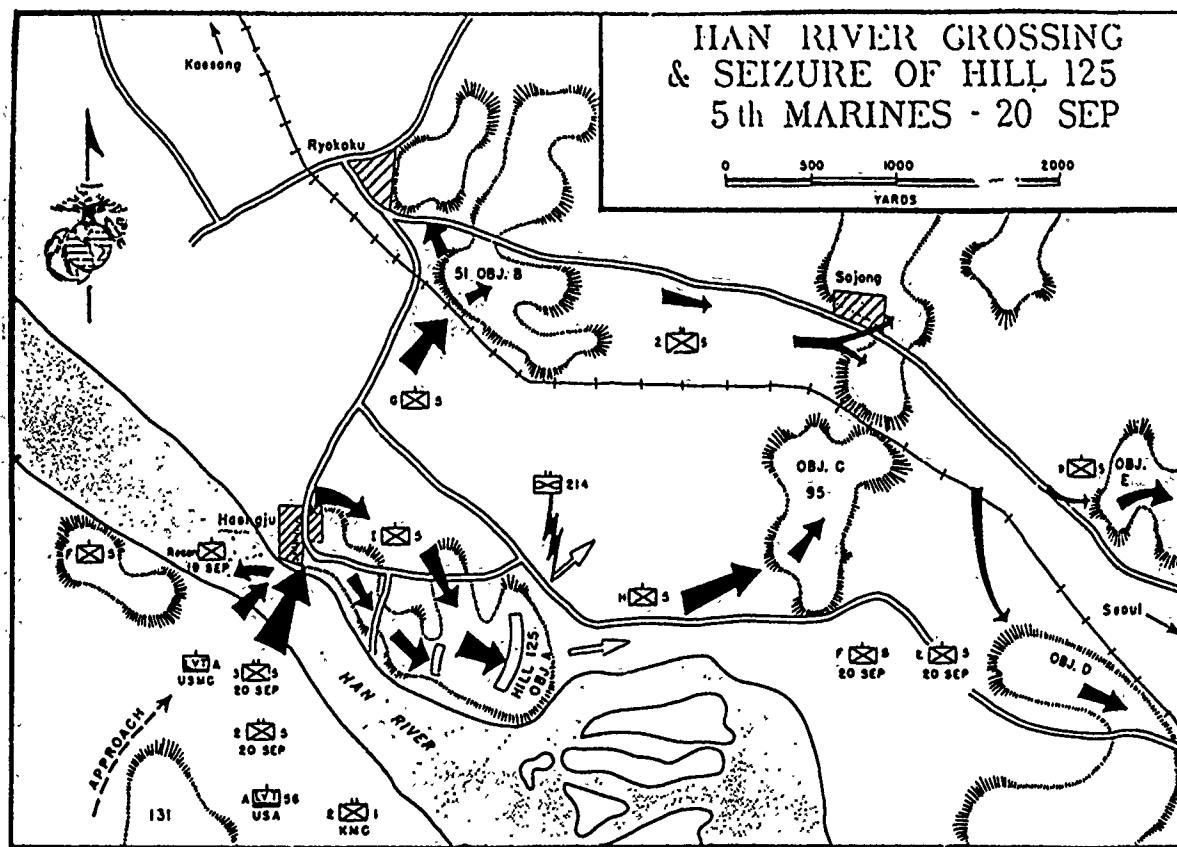
MAP IV - K

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 218)

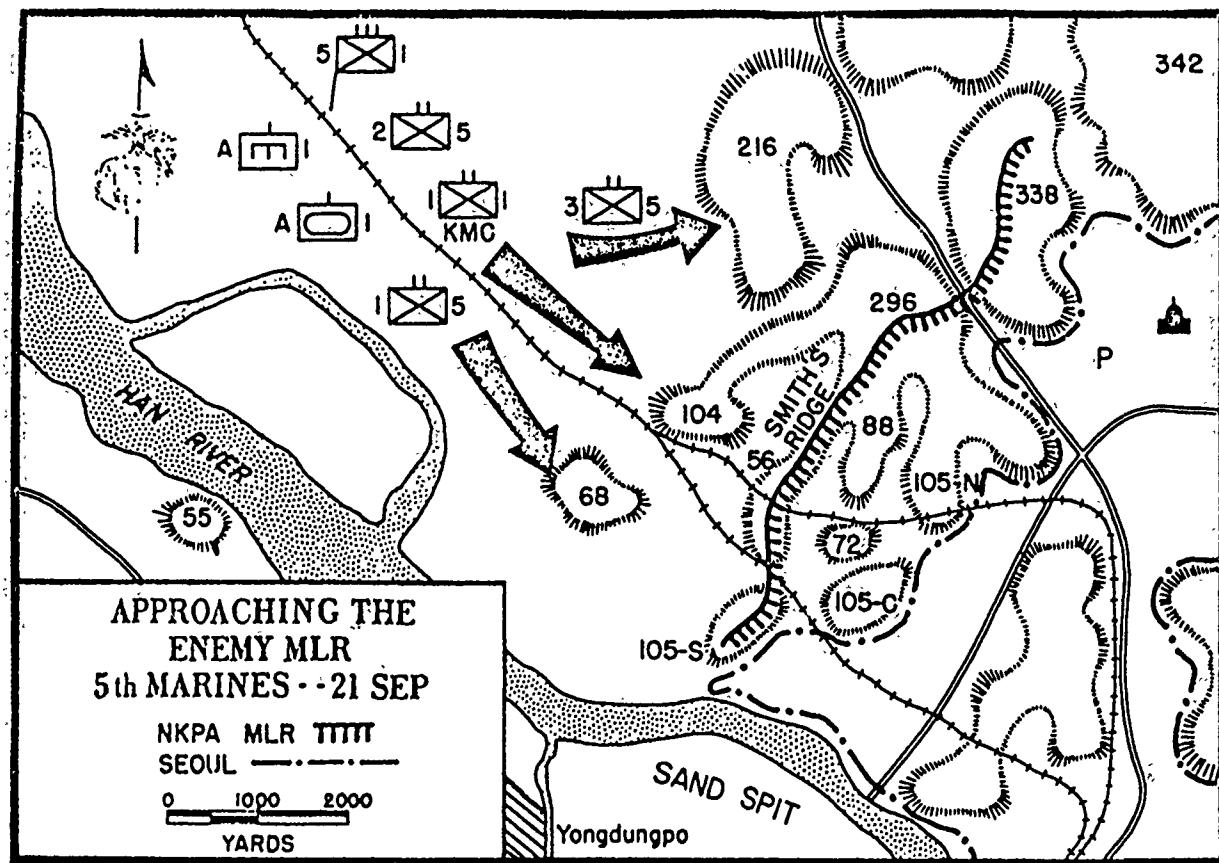


MAP IV-L

(MONTROSS AND CANZONA, p. 224)



MAP IV-M



MAP IV-N

V. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INCHON

IMMEDIATE SIGNIFICANCE

The immediate military impact of INCHON was dramatic. The NKPA at the Pusan Perimeter now faced a numerically superior and better supplied force. At their backs the North Koreans now found a major UN force that was severing their logistical lines. The North Koreans were very vulnerable.

The Eighth Army initiated its attack north to crush the NKPA against the "anvil" of the X Corps on 16 September 1950. The attack met strong enemy resistance all around the Pusan Perimeter and the first few days were marked by bloody attacks and counterattacks. By 18 September the North Koreans began to relinquish ground and by 20 September UN forces were penetrating the perimeter. (Almond, p. 13)

The US IX Corps in the south moved forward rapidly. In the Mansan area, the Corps forced the North Korean 6th and 7th Divisions back and within four days the Corps had reached Chinju. During the next week the enemy was driven back almost to Hadong. The US I Corps to the north crossed the Nakdong River on 19 September and launched an attack the following day up the Kumchon-Taejon axis which drove the North Korean 1st, 3rd, 10th and 13th Divisions back approximately thirty-five miles. On the northern and western front the North Korean 8th,

15th, 12th, and 5th Divisions were pushed back nearly seventy miles in one week. (Almond, pp. 13-14; Esposito, Section 3, Map 6).

On 26 September 1950 units of the 7th Division, X Corps, made contact with units of the 1st Cavalry Division, I Corps, Eighth Army, thereby achieving one of the main objectives of INCHON. More than half of the remaining North Korean forces south of the 38th Parallel faced certain death or capture in a rapidly closing circle of UN forces. (Almond, p. 14; Esposito, Section 3, Map 6) Compared to the dismal scenes of retreat in June and July, INCHON had produced a dramatic turning point in the war.

LONG TERM SIGNIFICANCE

In addition to the aforementioned immediate results of INCHON many long term results are also evident. These outcomes will be discussed from three perspectives: tactical, strategic, and historical.

The tactical outcome of INCHON demonstrated that a requirement still existed for the United States to be capable of conducting amphibious operations and that the Navy, and especially the Marine Corps, were best suited for this mission. There had been an opinion prevalent among many military and civic leaders that this form of warfighting was passe, that the airpower era had somehow made conventional operations like this obsolete. (Heinl, p. 265) GEN Omar N.

Bradley, appearing before the House Armed Services Committee on October 19, 1949, had stated "I also predict that large-scale amphibious operations...will never occur again." The following year Marines landed at Inchon. (Heinl, p. 3) This nuclear war mindset also questioned the necessity for naval aviation in support of the Marines, but Inchon revitalized that concept as well. (Heinl, p. 266)

America was losing sight of the fact that she was a maritime power, probably because the Air Force controlled the nuclear arsenal (submarines equipped with nuclear weapons were not deployed until the 1960's). Robert D. Heinl, Jr. states in his book Victory at High Tide that "America is a maritime power, that her weapon is the trident, and her strategy that of the oceans. Only through the sure and practiced exercise of sea power could this awkward war in a remote place have been turned upside down in a matter of days." (Heinl, p. 257)

There were problems with the amphibious warfare tactical doctrine which precipitated the rewriting of the textbook. The Inchon assault was fraught with handicaps. Stated one planning officer, "We drew up a list of every conceivable and natural handicap and Inchon had them all." (Higgins, p. 44) But MacArthur still believed the amphibious landing was the "most powerful tool we have" and ordered the mission, in spite of what he considered to be a "5,000 to 1" chance of success. (Higgins, p. 46) The tactics of amphibious warfare were so well applied in a high risk environment at Inchon that MacArthur later

stated, "The star of the US Navy and Marine Corps had never shown brighter." (Higgins, p. 48)

Joint planning and operations were conducted successfully in spite of the parochial attitudes of many key players. In the view of the official Marine Corps historians, "The victory was not won by any one nation or any one branch of the military service... The Inchon-Seoul operation was conducted jointly by the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps." Unfortunately, President Truman never mentioned the Marines when recognizing the other three services for their efforts. (Heinl, p. 264) Of course INCHON was also a combined operation.

The paramount strategic outcome of INCHON was that it signaled the turning point of the war. With the US forces having pushed back into the Pusan area and holding in a defensive posture, a grand strategy was needed to turn the tide. It was MacArthur who saw the Inchon area as the logistic heart of Korea and conceptualized the assault. (Higgins, p. 43) In spite of the handicaps, and the risk of failure, MacArthur ordered the invasion. Without a decisive turn of events, the war, MacArthur believed, would become one of attrition and of indefinite duration. (Higgins, p. 47) And, if the loss of Korea were to happen, the consequences would be disastrous to the region. Fortunately, this was not the case. Reporting to the United Nations after the capture of Seoul, MacArthur stated, "Events of the past two weeks have been decisive...A successful frontal attack and envelopment has completely changed the tide of battle in South Korea. The

backbone of the North Korean Army has been broken and their scattered forces are being liquidated." (Heinl, p. 257) But this triumph was short-lived because it was the X Corps' success at Inchon which allegedly inspired the Chinese to begin moving southward. (Langley, p. 5)

Michael Langley states in his book Inchon Landing, MacArthur's Last Triumph that INCHON was "the fulcrum on which the whole military and diplomatic conduct of the war balanced. Its outstanding and unexpected success allegedly inspired the first surreptitious movement southward of Chinese "volunteers," masterminded by the Army Commander, Marshal Lin Piao, and commanded by GEN Peng Te-dhuai, when the essential communist initiative passed from Russia to China and so to what MacArthur called "an entirely new war." (Langley, p. 5) MacArthur had underestimated the capabilities of the Chinese Army and, when conferring with President Truman on Wake Island a month after the Inchon landing, he stated, "...if the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang there would be the greatest slaughter (of North Korean forces)." (Langley, p. 36) It was MacArthur's miscalculation of Chinese intentions and capabilities, coupled with the outstanding success of which influenced President Truman's decision on September 27, 1950 to allow the General to pursue operations north of the 38th parallel. (Heinl, p. 267)

The landing at Inchon indirectly planted the seeds of limited war theory. A constant fear of President Truman was the possibility of Soviet support to China and North Korea and of

their possible intervention into the war. MacArthur dismissed this concern believing a Sino-Soviet alliance to be infeasible. However, being that this was the age of "nuclear holocaust" with fears of World War Three prevalent, President Truman did not want to take any unnecessary chances. He was in fear of "gambling his career on an unpopular strategy, and losing." (Langley, p. 37) It was at this point in the war that Truman decided on a plan of limited war, i.e., limited objectives. He did not want to give the Russians cause to accuse the US of undue aggression. (Langley, p. 38) It was this mindset which formulated his position on not crossing the Yalu River. It may have been this concept that inspired President John F. Kennedy to declare a policy whereby the US must be prepared to engage in limited war as well as continue to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent.

A final historical result of INCHON needs to be mentioned. The boldness and daring displayed by MacArthur during Inchon and the genius of his strategic thinking made many believe this to be his finest hour. However, the egoism and arrogance of MacArthur, which was fueled by his quick and decisive victory at Inchon, became the tools of his downfall. (Heinl, p. 267) The confidence in MacArthur's judgement was becoming greater, his popularity was increasing. The British Chiefs of Staff considered his accomplishment "among the finest strategic achievements in military history." (Higgins, p. 48) MacArthur had become untouchable. But, as pointed out earlier, it was the errors in his judgment concerning Chinese

intervention which eroded the underpinnings of his stature and contributed to his later relief.

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